

HEINE AS A CRITIC OF  
HIS OWN WORKS

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## PREFACE

THIS STUDY was largely an outgrowth of the author's early investigations in preparation for a paper on Heine's literary criticism in the German Literature seminar conducted by Dr. Robert Herndon Fife in 1926.

It soon became apparent that the most interesting aspect of Heine's critical genius was that concerned with his own work. Of all the abundant and varied critical material found in the works, letters and conversations of the poet, that which relates to himself is, as might be expected, the greatest in quantity and the richest in subtle power of evaluation. Here is revealed the core of the artistic personality. Here we see the judgment of a critical mind, capable of a most realistic and discerning analysis, in conflict with the personal ego.

The investigation, therefore, set forth to sound out Heine's views of his own work and of his poetic personality, in so far as the sources permitted. In the course of time, there developed a fairly definite picture. The poet and the poetic work appeared in forms which obviously cannot be fully objective, but are, nevertheless, definitely and adequately sketched. The poet's methods, his strength and his shortcomings as a literary judge reveal themselves with peculiar clearness as he deals with the children of his own brain.

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F.H.W.



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## INTRODUCTION

WOLFGANG MENZEL, in reviewing Heine's first *Salon* volume for the literary supplement of the *Morgenblatt*, writes that no one had ever talked more about himself than Heine. This opinion is not only borne out by the actual testimony, but the characteristic remains and always will remain the starting point for any valid appreciation of Heine's personality. Here, at least, Menzel, the arch-renegade and notorious informer against *Junges Deutschland*, did not distort the facts.

The presence of the ubiquitous ego in all of Heine's writing is a symptom of the age in which he lived. It was an age that encouraged and made fashionable the cult of self. The Romantic revolution, indeed, was primarily concerned with the individual's reactions to the world, always considered subjectively and with an eye to the inner self. One result of this appears in the essentially egoistic attitude that characterizes so many writers of that period. One may trace its beginnings in Rousseau and find its apex in Byron. In Germany it marks especially the group *Junges Deutschland* and reaches almost phenomenal heights in the art of Richard Wagner.

The influence of Byron's subjectivity on Heine has often been discussed and has certainly not been exaggerated.<sup>1</sup> In the last chapter of this work occasion offered itself to treat more specifically certain aspects of the Heine-Byron relationship. This influence was particularly noticeable during the first half of the German poet's life, but it never ceased to be one of the fundamental aspects of his nature. At the same time, although he experienced "Byronism" more strongly than most of his contemporaries, Heine shared this experience with countless other creative spirits, for Byronism was, after all, only a symptom of a disease that afflicted Europe at this period. One has only to turn to the highly subjective, extremely personal, *Briefe* of

Rahel Varnhagen, or to Börne's *Briefe aus Paris*, or Pückler-Muskau's *Briefe eines Verstorbenen* to realize to what extent the "ich" was exploited during the early decades of the nineteenth century in Germany. All this enables us to appreciate Heine's ironical complaint to Moses Moser (Jan. 11, 1825): "I have made the discovery that everybody in Germany is a genius, and I, I alone am the only one who is not."<sup>2</sup>

Any attempt to formulate reliable theories of criticism on the basis of an artist's written or spoken words is always hazardous. Especially in Heine's case, the pitfalls in the way of such a formulation are numerous, if one takes into consideration his artistic *naturel*, his personal idiosyncrasies, the problems engendered by his Jewish heritage, the bias of contemporaries, and the general instability of his age. Critics of discernment have professed to find evidences of insincerity and affectation in Heine's personal as well as in his literary life. Others, again, have endeavored to remove the least taint of these failings from his record. Both sides err in a desire to reach clear-cut, positive conclusions. The presence of too many imponderables renders any definite formulation on this point impractical and futile. For these misunderstandings and uncertainties Heine is not solely to blame. It is true that many of his statements are flat contradictions of each other. What he has to say of himself in his published works is often clouded by off-hand statements to friends and acquaintances; the tenor of his works is sometimes out of tune with that of the letters. Yet on more than one occasion Heine expressly warned those who had ears to hear, not to measure his life's work with the yardstick of consistency, or to attribute to him an infallibility in self-critical judgment that is rarely found beneath the stars. On Oct. 6, 1826 he wrote Merckel: "At bottom it is also a matter of indifference to me what I write about; it is all God's world and deserving of observation. And what I do not read out of things, I read into them."<sup>3</sup> And when he tells us in *Buch Le Grand* that, "So long as my heart is filled with love and my neighbor's head filled

with folly, I shall never lack material to write on," we must expect to find him sharing the errors and vagaries of his subject, humanity. Heine's impassioned defense of the freedom of the creative mind, while it may raise obstacles for a certain type of rigid scholasticism which feels obliged to label and pigeon-hole every author, really lightens the task of the investigator aiming for a better understanding and a clearer perception of the personality he is dealing with, by equipping him at the start with a very significant criterion. What he has to look for is not intellectual but artistic consistency.

There are in Heine's case many factors that render difficult the search for the real core of personality. We must remember, for example, that the pressure of private circumstances and the poet's inordinate craving for security and prestige were important motives in the conception and development of much of his best prose. We must remember also that he was at heart a romantic dreamer who was obliged to live in the political turmoil of his day. We must not forget that he probably suffered from his student days until the end of his life with a deadly disease which has been diagnosed as an inflammation of the spinal marrow (*Rückenmark-Entzündung*). These were conditions that fostered subjectivity in what must have been a naturally introverted temperament. The effect of this intensive occupation with self is manifest in the earliest records from Heine's pen and it appears throughout life in his evaluation of his own work.

Certainly Heine evidenced a strong disposition to pose. We can not overlook the fact that many of his attitudes and opinions proceeded from a desire to conform to a certain type of personality and are to that extent insincere. In his early manhood this was the type which popular tradition derived from Lord Byron. The familiar lines that accompany the Heine portrait by Ludwig Emil Grimm,

Verdrossnen Sinn im kalten Herzen hegend,  
Schau ich verdriesslich in die kalte Welt,

show as pure Byronic pose as that which appears in the drawing

itself, revealing, as it does, Heine's melancholy, blasé profile in the usual Byronic manner.

One can not fail to recognize," writes Felix Melchior, "that in every situation where Heine expresses himself approvingly of Byron, it is his chief aim to push himself into the foreground at the same time. This intention becomes perfectly manifest when one considers the business-like procedure with which Heine apparently desired to exploit the still active interest in Byron's destiny, in order to boost his own prestige a little.<sup>6</sup>

Illustrative of this is the attempt he made<sup>a</sup> to have "R." (probably Ludwig Robert), through the agency of Moser, write an article about him (Heine) shortly after Byron's death. The letter to Moser, June 25, 1824, reveals the intensity of Heine's desire for public recognition and his willingness to employ any method to attain that end. "It is immaterial to me," the letter reads, "extremely immaterial whether my poetry pleases the great and small mob. But it is not immaterial to me at this moment what is written about it, and I can by no means allow you to forget your promise with regard to the *Morganblatt*. "R." will gladly provide for the article. Byron is now dead, and a word about him now is fitting. . . ."<sup>7</sup>

There is pose, again, in the Byronic tradition, in his fondness for speaking of his own weaknesses. He loves to portray himself as one who has drunk to the dregs the experience of life. The girl in the "Berg-Idylle" speaks to the poet:

Daß du gar zu oft gebetet,  
Das zu glauben wird mir schwer,  
Jenes Zucken deiner Lippen  
Kommt wohl nicht vom Beten her.

Jenes böse, kalte Zucken,  
Das erschreckt mich jedesmal,  
Doch die dunkle Angst beschwichtigt  
Deiner Augen frommer Strahl.<sup>8</sup>

Here, as Melchior has pointed out, Heine assumes a well-known Byronic attitude.



Years later, in *Shakespeares Mädchen und Frauen*, our author was so far removed from the impressionable, Byronic period of his youth that he could look impersonally on this blasé pose. For that which he diagnosed as the characteristic attitude toward life of the Parisian youth of Alfred de Musset's time had been his own a decade earlier.

It was only to be regretted" [we read in the conclusion of the work mentioned above] "that the author [Alfred de Musset], then in his youth, besides the French translation of Shakespeare, had also to read a translation of Byron and was thereby misled into affecting, in the dress of the splenetic Lord, the satiety and loathing for life which then was fashionable among the young people in Paris. The rosiest little boys, the healthiest greenhorns maintained at that time that their capacity for enjoyment was exhausted, and they pretended to a senile frigidity of feelings and allowed themselves to appear worn out and bored.<sup>9</sup>

Examples are not lacking in his poetry of an affected emotional overflow. His great sensitivity, arising from racial difficulties and physical handicaps, gave birth to cries of pain and lamentations that were undoubtedly sincere; the experience which impelled him to discharge these emotions into poetry is most genuine, and, certainly, tragic. But lines like,

Aus meinen großen Schmerzen  
Mach' ich die kleinen Lieder. ("Lyrisches Intermezzo," No. 36)<sup>10</sup>  
or, better yet,

Es treibt mich ein dunkles Sehnen  
Hinauf zur Waldeshöh,  
Dort löst sich auf in Tränen

Mein übergroßes Weh. ("Lyrisches Intermezzo," No. 40)<sup>11</sup>

are certainly exaggerated, if not altogether artificial, reflections of his phase of soul at that time. To the modern reader any lyrical hyperbole of the emotions is always suspect. If the poet's verse is born of suffering, as Heine's verse most convincingly was, the point does not have to be labored. In Biblical times the lyrical outburst of pain and joy was the most natural, if not

the only, channel of artistic expression among the Jews, and Heine shares with his race the tradition that sanctions the unburdening of the emotions in the most direct, unhampered fashion. This, however, does not clear him of the charge of affectation. He was no Hebrew prophet singing in the wilderness, but a sophisticated child of his time.

It was also characteristic of romantic poets to identify their own emotional experience with that of the universe at large. In the *Reise von München nach Genua* Heine writes: "Tirily! Tirily! I am alive. I sense the sweet pain of existence, I feel all the joys and agonies of the world, I suffer for the salvation of the entire human race, I atone for its sins but I also enjoy them."<sup>12</sup> Likewise the effectiveness of the short poem in the "Heimkehr" (No. 24),

Ich unglücksel'ger Atlas! eine Welt,  
Die ganze Welt der Schmerzen, muss ich tragen,  
Ich trage unerträgliches, und brechen  
Will mir das Herz im Leibe,<sup>13</sup>

is explained by the complete identification of the poet with his subject, the distracted Germany in the decade after the Wars of Liberation, as Wagner identified himself with an ideal manhood in Siegfried. But it is difficult to absolve Heine from pose in such expressions of Weltschmerz.

Not infrequently Heine, resorting to an orthodox use of "romantic irony" is fully conscious of his pose, and, in the very act of assuming it, holds himself up to ridicule. The expansion of the poet's self to the universal, infinite scale brings in its train, with revulsion of feeling, a subsequent contraction of that self into the finite and insignificant. Heine's personality was never able to preserve a balance between the two: he was either flying over the heights or crawling in the depths. The latter is the situation in "Der Gesang der Okeaniden" ("Nordsee II"), when the Oceanides upbraid the poet for his boasting optimism:

O Thor, du Thor, du prahlender Thor!

Die tändelnden Kinder des Herzens,  
 Und, ach! dein Herz, Nioben gleich,  
 Versteinert vor Gram!  
 In diesem Haupte wird's Nacht,  
 Und es zucken hindurch die Blitze des Wahnsinns,  
 Und du prahlst vor Schmerzen . . . !<sup>14</sup>

Such confessions of weakness and distrust in himself are not to be dismissed lightly, for though a conscious bid for sympathy, and to that extent a pose, they reflect a genuine emotional situation.

Lack of money, or excess of it," [he writes Moser, Sept. 30, 1833] "has not the least influence upon my principles, but all the more upon my actions. Yes, great Moser, H. Heine is very small. Truly, little Marcus is larger than I am. This is no jest, but most serious and furious gravity. I cannot repeat it often enough to you, in order that you will not measure me by the rule of your own great soul. Mine is elastic rubber, stretches often into the infinite and often contracts to minuteness. But at least I have a soul."<sup>15</sup>

Often, this pose of his, applied to his own work, finds expression in a harmless, often captivating fun-poking at himself, such as poem No. 56 of the "Heimkehr."

Mir träumt': ich bin der liebe Gott,  
 Und sitz' im Himmel droben,  
 Und Englein sitzen um mich her,  
 Die meine Verse loben.<sup>16</sup>

Or when, as in the *Schwabenspiegel*, he writes: "A scientist has made the very correct observation that in the summertime, especially during the dog days, far more is written against me than in the wintertime."<sup>17</sup> Of like nature is the boastful remark, underlaid with sly humor, in the *Buch Le Grand*, to the effect that his fame was still sleeping in the marble quarries of Carrara and that aristocratic English ladies in green veils had not yet consulted their Baedekers for the house in which he was born.<sup>18</sup> These are jests, to be sure, but behind them lurks a real complex, the constant urge toward self-evaluation.

With the passage of time, as he became more confident of the

great genius at his command, he resorted to another type of pose, one that served either to protect him from something disagreeable or to place him before the footlights. Often it was an attempt to reverse the real situation and assume a mock-superior attitude when there was no occasion for it. This occurs in the letter to Moser of October 25, 1824, that chronicles the famous interview with Goethe in Weimar. On this occasion Heine mentioned the fact that he was writing a *Faust*. Goethe, who had been irritated by the attempts of several insignificant poets to complete his then unfinished work, asked, with Olympian coldness, if he had any further business in Weimar. The conclusion which the young poet gives in his account of the interview is a characteristic expression of the irony which masks a humiliation: "I was in Weimar; there is good roast goose to be had there, too."<sup>19</sup> When, at the close of the "Berg-Idylle," he proclaims his credo of faith to the little mountain maid:

Nun, so schau mich an, mein Kindchen,  
Küsse mich, und schaue dreist:  
Denn ich selber bin ein solcher.<sup>20</sup>  
Ritter von dem heil'gen Geist,

seriousness and frivolity are subtly intermixed, but one is, after all, inclined to take the declaration as a serious confession of faith in himself and his mission.

In all these cases, where the poet is fully conscious of his pose, the reader is won over by the flash of his scintillating humor. But at times a sense of irritation and an unguarded moment of boastfulness present him in a less favorable light. Thus in a bitter, supplementary passage to Chapter VIII of *Die Bäder von Lucca*, found in a manuscript unpublished at Heine's death, he takes the clergy sharply to task: "The priests derive satisfaction from gnawing at my good name, and imagine that they are in this way resisting the power of my word."<sup>21</sup> In spite of his reiterations in *Börne* that the Frankfort critic had never been able in any way to hurt his feelings, the language in which this *noli me tangere* is dressed does not conceal petty irritation and

a deep-seated grudge. "In spite of his (Börne's) most vehement desire," he continues, "he was never in a position to injure me, and everything that he produced here as well as in the particular articles of the *Reformateur* I was able to read with equanimity, as though it were not directed against me, but against Nebukodonosor, King of Babylon, or against Frederick the Great. . . ."<sup>22</sup> His defense borders on the rhetorical when he says: "You reach out to me from the grave with a pleading hand? . . . Without malice I extend to you mine. . . . Behold, how beautiful and clean it is! It was never soiled, neither by the filthy gold of enemies of the people nor by the hand-clasp of the mob. . . . At bottom you have really never injured me. . . . In all your insinuations there is not a louis'd'or's worth of truth!"<sup>23</sup> When one considers that the "beautiful, clean hand" did not hesitate to accept a pension of 4800 francs yearly for a period of over ten years from secretly administered funds of the French government, one is privileged to be a little skeptical of Heine's ardent protestations of integrity. Surely, no one will deny him his right to speak in glowing superlatives of his literary works, since he was convinced of their worth, and more especially since the judgment of posterity has upheld his claims, but one can not help feeling astounded, in spite of the breath-taking daring of Heine's assumptions, to note in the *Börne* the following paean of self-laudation:

We shall not dispute over the question whether that which I have created in this life was good or bad. Enough, it was great. I noticed it from the painful expansion of soul out of which these creations proceeded . . . and I notice it also from the smallness of the dwarfs who stand in front of them and dizzily gaze up at them. Their vision never reaches the apex, and they only hit their noses on the pedestal of those monuments which I have planted in the literature of Europe to the undying fame of the German spirit.

It is significant, however, that he concludes this outburst with a certain inner questioning:

Are these monuments entirely without blemish? Are they entirely without fault and sin? Indeed, I do not wish to say anything definite on this point.<sup>24</sup>

If these and other expressions of self-distrust and humility are borne in mind, the question of Heine's sincerity appears in a different light. Torn and swayed by conflicting emotions, he inevitably committed himself to inconsistencies in thought and expression. Only by remembering that what appears on the surface insincere to the reader may not have seemed so to the author, can one do adequate justice to the poet's genuineness of feeling.

While the question as to the sincerity of the poet's statements regarding himself and his work may not be answered with assurance in a particular instance, is this then true of Heine's self-criticism as a whole? What is the composite picture that emerges from these self-revelatory comments, in which, now "himmelhoch jauchzend," now "zum Tode betrübt," now eagerly apologetic, now affecting a scornful indifference, now in pathetic uncertainty, seeking approval from friends and the public, he continually appears as judge and censor of his own works? Is there an inner consistency in this self-judgment which flows continually through the years? What impression does it leave of the poet as a critic of literature? It is hoped that the investigation that is reported below will throw some light on these questions.

It cannot, of course, expect to furnish a satisfactory answer to another question which suggests itself in this connection: How far does the interpretation which Heine gives of his own genius accord with that of less interested critics? Of Heine one may say, as Schiller said of Wallenstein, "Sein Charakterbild schwankt noch in der Geschichte," for literary history has not as yet rendered a verdict on the poet that is any more objective than its judgment of the man. The opinions of posterity are as irreconcilable as those of his contemporaries and range from the fulsome plaudits of critics who strike a higher note than any

which Heine ventured to touch, even in his most extravagant moments, down to the shrill denunciations of fanatics like Bartels. More than any other German author, Heine still awaits a just and equitable verdict on his work. It is to be hoped, therefore, that an exhaustive canvass of his own opinions may contribute something to open the way for a critical approach by others, for even though this evidence is subjective, it can not be denied that it is an essential and organic expression of the poet's personality.

The following discussion has been developed from three main sources: the prose and verse in his collected works, for which I have used Elster's edition, the now available letters (three volumes) in Hirth's edition; and the *Gespräche*, for which Heinrich Houben has assembled a mass of material from the reports of contemporaries. Other critical material has been employed only to give further interpretation to Heine's own words or to clarify them. While a survey of contemporary opinion of Heine does not fall within the plan of my work, the *Gespräche*, as Houben has gathered them, do at various times indicate the degree of divergence between Heine's estimate of himself and that of his contemporaries. This will be found to be of importance in judging the poet's statements. As Ellen Key in her life of Rahel Varnhagen has so truly said, "There is only one objective way of drawing a marked individuality: to compare the person's own utterances and actions with the impression his personality produces on contemporaries. For a person's words often deceive one, his actions not infrequently, the opinions of others more often than all. But if all agree, one can be certain that in the particular case the unity and cohesion of the personality are beyond doubt."<sup>25</sup>

Between the two methods of treatment by which the theme of this book might have been developed, the chronological and the categorical, a compromise was effected which combines both outlooks. Heine's creative activity definitely falls into two great periods, the year 1831 when he set out for Paris serving as the

dividing line. The Parisian period is, for critical purposes, usually broken up into two portions, for which the line of cleavage is the year 1848, the date of his last appearance in public, due to the critical turn taken by his illness. In this work, however, it has been thought best to treat the entire Parisian period as a unit. In each separate period the self-critical material has been considered from the standpoints of poetry and of prose. A treatment of Heine's dramas, ballets and epic fragments quite naturally fills in the gap between these two groups. A final chapter on Heine's views of his literary personality as a whole assembles material from all periods of the poet's life.

In the conclusion it seemed profitable to bring together again the thematic threads and endeavor to arrive at a conclusion and to estimate objectively the nature and value of the picture which the poet draws of himself.

The English translations are by the present writer. Wherever the interpretation of the original encounters stylistic difficulties, the original appears in a footnote.



## NOTES

### INTRODUCTION

1. Cf. Felix Melchior: *Heinrich Heines Verhältnis zu Lord Byron*. Berlin, 1903. *Litterarhistorische Forschungen*, No. XXVII. In the first part of this work Melchior treats quite adequately Heine's "Persönliche Stellungnahme gegenüber Byron." Particularly to the point is the following remark: "Gleich Heines erste Publikation in Buchform, die im Dezember 1821 (mit der Jahreszahl 1822) bei Mauer in Berlin ans Licht trat, war von Übertragungen aus Lord Byrons Werken begleitet, und es sieht fast aus, als habe der junge Heine dadurch die Kritik zum Vergleich mit Byron herausfordern wollen, indem er seine Lieder unter der Flagge des vielbewunderten Lords segeln liess" (p. 9). Speaking of Immermann's review of this volume of verse, wherein the Westphalian writer conceded a certain superficial resemblance to Byron on the part of Heine, but maintained at the same time that the German poet's temperament was "viel frischer und lebensmutiger," Melchior remarks that Heine always appreciated Immermann's judgments, which in this case, too, seemed to have contained truth.

In considerable detail Melchior considers the subject of Byronic pose and the rise and wane of Heine's Byron enthusiasm (pp. 11 ff.). The final chapter in Melchior's work is devoted to a consideration of Heine as translator of Byron.

2. Hirt, I., 340.
3. Hirt, I., 433.
4. Elster, III, 177.
5. Elster I, "Neuer Frühling," 221. The Heine portrait by Grimm is reproduced in Hirth I, 486.
6. Melchior, *o.c.*, 13.
7. Hirt I, 323-324.
8. Elster I, 153.
9. Elster III, 521.
10. Elster I, 79.
11. Elster I, 81.

12. Elster III, 225.
13. Elster, I, 107.
14. Hirt, I, 186.
15. Hirt, I, 253-254.
16. Elster I, 125.
17. Elster VII, 332-334: *Schwabenspiegel*.
18. Elster III, 144-145: "Aber mein Ruhm schläft jetzt noch in den Marmorbrüchen von Carrara, der Makulatur-Lorbeer, womit man meine Stirne geschmückt, hat seinen Duft noch nicht durch die ganze Welt verbreitet, und wenn jetzt die grünverschleierte vornehmen Engländerinnen nach Düsseldorf kommen, so lassen sie das berühmte Haus noch unbesichtigt und gehen direkt nach dem Marktplatz. . . ."
19. Hirt, I, 337.
20. Elster I, 155.
21. "Nachtrag zu den Reisebildern" in *Letzte Gedichte u. Gedanken von Heinrich Heine*, Hamburg, 1869, pp. 273 ff.
22. Elster VII, 135-136: *Ludwig Börne*.
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 141-142.
25. Ellen, Key: *Rahel Varnhagen—a Portrait*. Translated from the Swedish by A. G. Chater. New York: G. P. Putnam, Sons, 1913, page 37.

## CHAPTER I

### THE EARLY POETRY

IN AN EARLY LETTER to his school comrade, Christian Sethe, Heine wrote: "I am writing much poetry . . . whether the present poems are better than the earlier ones, I am not certain; this much I do know—they are much softer and sweeter, like anguish dipped in honey. I also intend to see them printed before long."<sup>1</sup> Already he had begun to view his work critically, and like all beginners who have difficulties with the materials by means of which they seek self-expression, he was struggling to find the particular form which suited his personality best.

From 1816, the date of this letter, until he went to the University of Bonn in 1819, little is known of Heine's literary preoccupations, and details of various unsuccessful business ventures alone keep us informed of his movements. From Bonn he informed his friends that A. W. Schlegel, who was then in the faculty, had paid considerable attention to his verse. The great critic had remarked upon its originality and had suggested alterations, at the same time directing him to study the English poets.<sup>2</sup> A translation of Byron's *Manfred* was the result of these studies. The interest that Schlegel, the high priest of romanticism, took in him inspired Heine to further production. The stimulus seems to have been very helpful, for the winter preceding his pen had been idle.<sup>3</sup>

During the following winter (1820-21), while he was working on *Almansor*, he sent a manuscript with the caption *Traum und Lied* to F. A. Brockhaus, the Leipsic publisher. This manuscript contained the poems which Maurer published in 1821 in Berlin as *Gedichte von H. Heine*, identical, for the most part, with the group *Junge Leiden* of the *Buch der Lieder*. It found no favor with the great Leipsic firm.<sup>4</sup> The accompanying letter,

however, throws light on the state of Heine's mind at this time. Referring again to the "most rigid originality" of the poems, attested by his master A. W. Schlegel, he adds:

Since unfortunate conditions compel me to suppress any poem that might be given a political interpretation and to select for this edition only those which are chiefly erotic, it naturally has to be a little thin. But with the exception of six poems which I published about four years ago in a Hamburg paper, *Der Wächter*, none of the poems of the manuscript have yet been printed, and they are well calculated to serve as evidence of my views on the question of present-day poetry.<sup>5</sup>

Already the life-long conflict with authority, with the church and state, is touched upon, and Eros is introduced as the fundamental inspiration of these early lyrics. Yet of this group of poems, which Maurer accepted for publication in 1821, Heine was inclined to speak depreciatingly. To Friedrich Rassmann, who desired from him biographical facts for his *Gallery of Poets*, he wrote that he did not yet deserve to be called a poet, and must first prove by the fruits of his pen that his creativeness was more than a transient urge to self-expression.<sup>6</sup>

In the meantime a friendly relationship with Karl Immermann was under way. This friend had the vision to understand and appreciate the caliber of Heine's talent. He reviewed favorably Heine's first little collection in the *Rheinisch-westfälischer Anzeiger* (1822).<sup>7</sup> In December 1822, then, Heine announced to Immermann the impending publication of his second book, which was to contain a crystallization of the moods of the earlier poems, "the pass-key to the sick-room of my feelings. Really," he concluded, "it is only for the few that one writes, especially when one has, as I have done, withdrawn more into one's self. This book will contain my little maliciously sentimental songs."<sup>8</sup> This was the *Lyrisches Intermezzo*,<sup>9</sup> which then came from the Press in April 1823. The success of the *Gedichte* in attracting interest to the young poet as a literary newcomer was attended by a violent critical warfare. A great many voices

were heard to protest against the bold innovations in his poetry. The result was a reaction within Heine himself. Hostile criticism always wounded his vanity, and, as Hirt, the editor of Heine's letters, points out, not only did this animosity give rise to many of the events of his life which are otherwise difficult to explain, but it also polluted in a most tragic sense the vital sources of expression.<sup>10</sup> He now found himself confronted with opposition, and this brought on a weary, pessimistic outlook on life. He began to see the faults in his own poetry. Another letter to Immermann of June 10, 1823, furnishes evidence of this.

The eternal gods know that from the very first hour when I read your tragedies I recognized you for that which you are; and I am just as confident in my judgment of myself. This assurance springs from no visionary self-delusion, rather from a clear consciousness, from an exact knowledge of the poetic and its natural antithesis, the ordinary. . . . Poetry would not exist at all for us if we could not everywhere see traces of the ordinary and trivial; we ourselves recognize our own nature only by perceiving the alien nature of another which serves as a standard of comparison. . . . And I am setting forth all this and have made the observations above candidly in order that you may believe that it is more than an ordinary phrase when I say: I know my weaknesses and gladly confess to them. . . . I will even confess gladly to you the chief drawback in my poetry. By accusing me of this you apparently fear to hurt me. It is the great one-sidedness which is manifest in my works, in that they are all variations of the same little theme.<sup>11</sup>

This one-sidedness, this continual treatment of the same theme, he tried to amend in his subsequent verse by writing on a variety of subjects. Yet, who can deny that it was just this one-sidedness, this intensely subjective approach, which called forth the fullest expression of his genius. It is in Heine as great a virtue as harmony and proportion in the verse of Goethe.

The self-confession recorded above was doubtless, in part at least, wrung from him under pressure from the critics. These, like all of their craft, were intent on interpreting the spirit of poetry out of daily life. Since he alluded to this practice of theirs

in the same letter to Immermann, it may have been a politic move on his part, by making this frank avowal of one weakness, to protect himself on all other fronts. Here he reveals the intricate workings of his mind at the time. Further on in the same letter he advances an explanation for the morbid tone of his poetry. The restless spirit, which was never fully adjusted to life, hastens to confess that physical ill-health may have lent a pathological cast to his work. There is, indeed, reason to believe that Heine had already made the discovery that his literary work was to be singularly at the mercy of his physical condition. "My ill-health may have contributed something sickly to my latest productions. Oh God! There is so much in my new book that will not stand the test of genuine criticism, and it would certainly not hurt me if that which I do not myself yet perceive were revealed to me."

The young poet had spent the previous winter in Berlin, associating with Rahel and her circle. This group was comprised of clever, intelligent people. Through such contacts the ego of the young *enfant terrible* was naturally inflated, and the combination of exhausting social duties and ill-health did not fail to leave its mark on him. The result is a resolve to free himself from the narrowness and morbidity that had marked his previous efforts. If up until that time he had depicted only a fragment of the world and played on a single, unvaried theme, or, as he had expressed it, had treated only of Psyche and Amor, he had now, as he tells Immermann, taken enough nourishment "to paint the canvas of the Trojan War." The salutary effect, especially, of Rahel's straightforward criticism, revealed itself in the form of a more rigid searching of self.

In 1823 he spent six weeks in Kuxhaven, where for the first time he became acquainted with the sea. In March 1824, when he had again matriculated at Göttingen to continue his law studies, he sent some poems, "drey und dreyzig Gedichte von H. Heine," to Gubitz to be published in the *Gesellschafter*. He had entered on a prolonged period of doubt and depression, due

largely to overwork and illness. On November 28, 1823, before leaving Lüneburg for Göttingen, he informed his friend Joseph Lehmann that he had given up writing verse until a better time, that only commonness and vulgarity ruled, and that he had no intention of surrendering to them.<sup>12</sup> Feelings of discouragement and defeat find expression in letters to his sister Charlotte Embden and to Rudolph Christiani. Signs of an inferiority complex, an angle that must also be taken into consideration in dealing with Heine, are strongly in evidence. Doubt of his genius assails him and he belittles his calling as poet. He is eager to have his sister know that he is something more than a poet (he used the belittling word "Poet" instead of the usual "Dichter"), that the gift of verse was only a small portion of his equipment.<sup>13</sup> Upon his return to Göttingen he seems anxious to drop the rôle of a literary personage.<sup>14</sup>

With the appearance of the "drei und dreissig Gedichte" referred to, republished in 1826 as "Die Heimkehr," his faith in himself began to rise again. He foresaw, wisely enough, that they would not win the unanimous plaudits of the majority of readers, but he surmised, quite correctly as it turned out, that they would create a stir of excitement.<sup>15</sup> The "Seestücke" he particularly called to the attention of his friends. The originality of these was certain, he felt, to introduce a new style of poetry into German literature,<sup>16</sup> "You will certainly be astonished," he wrote to Gubitz, "by the odd, nonchalant quality in the form of several of these poems; perhaps they will arouse you and other people to a disparaging shake of the head; yet I know that they are the most characteristic of any that I have so far written."<sup>17</sup>

The reader of Heine will have noticed the difference in nature and treatment between the earlier lyrics and these more recent ones. Not only did the poet avoid the one-sidedness of the *Lyrisches Intermezzo* by touching upon a larger variety of interests, but he also gave freer rein to his imagination by appealing to a wide range of emotion. Echoes of grief over the loss of

Amalie mingle with reminiscences of childhood, cloudy dream patterns with realistic images of the sea and of the pastor's house in the churchyard (No. 28), scorn and sarcasm with the tenderness of "Du bist wie eine Blume" and "Der Tod, das ist die kühle Nacht." The most marked difference between these poems and the previous ones lies in the nonchalant attitude, the varying shades of "romantic irony" that characterize many of them. Such poems are "Heimkehr" No. 17, ("Sei mir gegrüsst, du grosse,"), with the frivolous pun in the last two lines:

Die Thore jedoch, die liessen  
Mein Liebchen entwischen gar still;  
Ein Thor ist immer willig,  
Wenn eine Thörin will, (Elster, I., 104)

and "Heimkehr" N. 25 ("Die Jahre kommen und gehen"), with its upsetting anticlimax:

Nur einmal noch möcht' ich dich sehen,  
Und sinken vor dir aufs Knie,  
Und sterbend zu dir sprechen:  
Madame, ich liebe Sie! (Elster, I, 107.)

If we may trust the poet's statement as recorded in Fanny Lewald's diary,—and there is every reason for our doing so,—he recalled when well past middle life the cynical ending just quoted, together with other shrill dissonances of the time, as the outgrowth of a sharp dislike for the mushy sentimentalism of the Suabian School.<sup>18</sup>

The fact that Heine predicted a hostile critical reception by the public of these latest poems may perhaps be construed in two ways. He lacked temperamentally the artist's naïve and unshakable confidence in his work, and, morbidly self-critical as he was at the time, he was inclined to prepare himself for the shock of disapproval by magnifying his own weaknesses. This much is certain, he anticipated opposition and misunderstanding because he was afraid that his poetic vein was running thin, and he seemed disposed to dwell on this reflection with a sort of morbid anxiety.<sup>19</sup>



Critics of Heine, under the leadership of the truculent Bartels,<sup>20</sup> have denied him a deep, sympathetic understanding of German character. They have alluded to the Hebraic accent and oriental coloring of many of the poems, and therewith have assured themselves and us that Heine was not a German poet. Heine thus early in life anticipated the attitude of these fanatics. Although "Nordic" and "Aryan" had not yet made their appearance in German discussion, with all that these words imply in the way of intolerant brutality, Heine had felt the weight of anti-Semitism even in his first year at Göttingen, and he was eager to exculpate himself to himself and his friends of any trace of foreignism. He felt deeply the charge, as yet unspoken, or scarcely spoken, that he was not thoroughly German in nature and feeling. In a letter to his friend Christiani written about the same time that he forwarded the manuscript of his poems to Gubitz he declares himself on this point, and gives at the same time a valuable and interesting resumé of his views of his literary achievement up to that moment.

In my innermost soul," he writes to Immermann in the letter quoted above, "I love the German nature more than anything in the world, it is my joy and delight; my heart is an archive of German sentiment, as my two books are an archive of German song. My first book is even in its outward form entirely German. At that time my love for the German nature was not yet diminished. My second book (*Lyrisches Intermezzo u. Tragödien*) is only inwardly German; its external form is, however, rather more foreign. It is probable that out of dissatisfaction with things German, my muse trimmed her garment a little in the foreign style."<sup>21</sup>

It is curious, but perhaps not altogether unnatural, that, as his vexation with prevailing conditions in Germany increased, his productivity began to shift from poetry to prose. Illness and ennui weakened his spirit. More than ever "the great mob," as he called the indiscriminating world of critics and readers, called forth his bitter scorn.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, the slender output of verse during the second Göttingen period was of a nature to give the lie to those critics who found and find him un-German in spirit.

It is noteworthy that the poems of 1824, such as the "Bergidylle" in the *Harzreise*, are profound interpretations of the folkspirit of the German peasantry, and attest to a deep sympathy and understanding of it.

To a friend in the spring of this year he expressed the fear that he had become an "extinguished flame."<sup>23</sup> He refused to contribute anything to the annual *Rheinblüten*,<sup>24</sup> with the exception of a few insignificant poems,\* and in respect to these he half-concealed his authorship, signing them merely with the initial "H." "Whoever gives more than he has is a cowardly rascal," he declared in May, "and whoever puts his name to everything is a fool."<sup>25</sup> Friederike Robert, the charming recipient of these lines, may have wondered at the change that had come over the egoistic, self-centered poet of the Berlin period.

These were fluctuations in a nature unsettled and struggling. The mood of self-distrust is on him, and he fights it with the self-defense of cynical irony. In the fall of 1824 he undertook his journey through the Harz Mountains, and on October 25 he announced to his friend Moser the beginning of a prose tale, the future *Harzreise*.

I would like to tell you many things about my journey through the Harz Mountains, but I have already begun to write them down, and will probably send them to you this winter from Gubitz. There are to be verses in it, too, that will please you, beautiful and noble sentiment, and such like emotional rubbish. What is one to do? Truly, opposition to the trite and ordinary is a thankless task.<sup>26</sup>

In the same indifferent, careless tone he referred to the book as a mixture of nature description, wit, poetry and attention to detail in the manner of Washington Irving;<sup>27</sup> and he recommended the beautiful, new kind of verse; on the whole, it was, he thought, a motley scarecrow.<sup>28</sup> Of all the elements that constituted its literary structure he was inclined to regard the interspersed lyrics as the best.<sup>29</sup>

At this point in his life one can detect very clearly the conflict

between the two mediums, between prose and poetry. In the *Harzreise* a certain reconciliation was effected by the alternating use of both. In the following volumes of *Reisebilder*, poetry was completely assimilated into the prose, not to the detriment of the style of the latter, to be sure.

This continuous, pendulum-like swing from doubt and despair to self-understanding and confidence, also a characteristic of the artists of the later Impressionistic School of literature, of which Heine might be said to be a forerunner, is epitomized in a stanza from a poem of the "Heimkehr":

Mein Herz gleicht ganz dem Meere,  
Hat Sturm und Ebb' und Flut,  
Und manche schöne Perle  
In seiner Tiefe ruht.

The essential temper of these lines finds expression in the work of a later poet, Friedrich Nietzsche in the following lines from the latter's *Venedig*.<sup>30</sup>

Meine Seele, ein Saitenspiel,  
sang sich, unsichtbar berührt,  
heimlich ein Gondellied dazu,  
zitternd vor bunter Seligkeit.  
—Hörte Jemand ihr zu? . . .

It is not surprising, in view of the frequent revulsions of feeling to which Heine was subject, that after his return from Göttingen to Hamburg and his stay at Norderney his optimism should have returned. He considered that his poetic powers had expanded, that vagueness and a too subjective attitude had now given way to many-sidedness and objectivity.<sup>31</sup> On the other hand, this creative renaissance was compounded of doubtful elements, of vanity and the desire for praise.<sup>32</sup> Thus a few months later he copied out for his friend Christiani the verses of the "Heimkehr" (No. 33) beginning:

Sie liebten sich beide, doch keiner  
Wollt' es dem andern gestehen,

adding the marginal note, "Do you know a better song in the whole field of German literature?"<sup>34</sup>

A valuable contribution to his opinion of his verse at this time is his letter to Wilhelm Müller (Hamburg, June 7, 1826) which, brief as it is, has been used in many interpretations of Heine's poetry, particularly in connection with the *Volkslied*. It must be remembered that in letters to literary celebrities, Heine often resorted to flattery, indeed, to any device that would cement a literary friendship. One of the humiliating experiences which he faced throughout his early period was the manner in which the eminent writers of the day, Immermann excepted, ignored him. However, after we make allowances for the excessive flattery and rather cloying encomiums which he bestowed upon Müller, we may find in the self-evaluation of Heine's letter a kernel of objective criticism.

I am great-hearted enough to confess openly to you that my small Intermezzo meter has not merely chance similarity with your customary meter, but that it is in debt to your songs for its intimate cadences, for at the time when I wrote the *Intermezzo*, I had just become acquainted with the charming songs of the miller. Very early, in fact, I allowed the German folk-song to influence me. Later, when I was studying at Bonn, August Schlegel unlocked a great many metrical secrets for me, but I think I discovered for the first time in your songs the pure tone and the true simplicity for which I have always striven. How pure, how clear your songs are! And all of them are folksongs. In my poems, on the other hand, only the form is somewhat in the idiom of the people, the contents derive from conventional society. Yes, I am generous enough to repeat very definitely . . . that not until I had read your seventy-seven poems did it become clear to me how to construct new forms, which are likewise in the style of the people, out of the old folksong forms, without its being necessary to imitate the old linguistic unevenness and awkwardness.<sup>35</sup>

There has already been occasion above to mention the self-contradictory tendencies in many of Heine's poems. Without denying that his use of sarcasm was often intentional and

deliberate, we must admit that at times this dangerous tool seems to have mastered him against his will. Indeed it seems as if he, like Goethe's Sorcerer's Apprentice, was more often than not controlled by the perversity of the instrument which he had called into being. One case will illustrate this. In a letter to Friedrich Merckel from Norderney, July 25, 1826, he included three improvised lines of verse, not important, rather frivolous, with the following comment:

You see from these verses what a wicked person I am, and how little I deserve the goodness and love of my friends. But for our consolation let it be said that, in spite of those lines, I was about to say something deeply spiritual and friendly, and as usual, the ironic devil substituted for it just the directly opposite.<sup>36</sup>

While at this time he seems rather to have enjoyed the reputation for wickedness that people gave him, he was aware of the danger attendant on a misuse of irony. "But one must proceed cautiously with irony because in the end one's best friends become distrustful, as, for example, Merckel."<sup>37</sup> The new confidence in his gifts as a poet, which is echoed here and there in Heine's letters during the fall which followed his promotion at Göttingen and the following months at Hamburg, grew out of a revival of productivity in the inspiring companionship of the North Sea. The weeks at Cuxhaven in the preceding year had given him the "Seestücke" of the "Heimkehr," whose "Situationsbilder" have something of the freshness and vigor of the fisher village and the wave-swept shore. The months on the island of Norderney and visits to the neighboring islands brought him fully under the spell of the ocean in all its moods. It gave him a new poetic form. A new series of sea poems came into being, which as "Nordseebilder," accompanied with the "Harzreise" and the "Heimkehr" group in the first volume of *Reisebilder* when it came from Hoffmann and Campe's publishing house in May 1826.<sup>38</sup> For the form of the poems Heine makes no claim to originality, but their content, he is convinced, is of his very essence. "Tieck and Robert," he writes to Moser

toward the end of the year, "have at least made the form of these poems pretty well known, even if they did not create it; but their content belongs to the most individual that I have written."<sup>39</sup>

Indeed, he might have claimed more, for the poems referred to in the letter to Merckel, the "Nordseebilder," were the first of their kind in all German literature. Far more daring in style and content than the three "Seestücke" of the "Heimkehr," the "Nordseebilder I" was a milestone in the evolution of the German lyric. A literary treatment of the sea had been noticeably absent from German literature before Heine. Wilhelm Müller had written only casually of it. Goethe was almost forty years old when he saw it for the first time from Venice. "The flood covered the lagoons, reads a passage of the *Italienische Reise* (it was not from actual contact with the sea itself but from the Campanile di San Marco that Goethe saw it), "and when I turned my glance to the so-called Lido—it is a narrow band of land which encloses the lagoons—I saw the sea for the first time, and on it several sails."<sup>40</sup> That was all. He spoke immediately of other matters. For him the sea was another gigantic manifestation of nature, but an impersonal one. Nor did he enter more deeply into its spirit after contact with its stormy moods on the passage between Naples and Sicily. In Sicily, to be sure, he felt the grip of the Odyssey, and planned in *Nausikaa* an epic poem which, had it been carried out, might have brought him closer to the infinitely varying character of the sea. As it is, we have as a result of his voyage on the Mediterranean only two poems, "Glückliche Fahrt" and "Meeresstille." The latter should be compared, for a better evaluation of the remarks to follow, with Heine's poem of the same name.<sup>41</sup> It will be seen that Goethe views the sea from the standpoint of a truly classic detachment. Even the storm-whipped waves, when "Aeolus löset das ängstliche Band," fail to excite the poet, and take the harmonious form of an idyllic seascape. For Heine, on the other hand, the sea was closely knit with his very being. Its heroic

moods intoxicated him; its calm evoked pictures that are now romantic, now charged with ironical humor.

Fanny Stahr's *Memoirs* furnish interesting data on this period of composition. Heine, looking with the perspective of almost twenty-five years, set forth the difficulties he had to contend with as the first German to make the sea a theme for poetry. Whoever undertook the task was treating a subject entirely unknown to the majority of readers. In reply to her comment that he was the sea-poet of Germany *par excellence*, Heine said characteristically: "There is just exactly where the difficulty lay. For who in Germany at that time was acquainted with the sea? Now it is different; now everybody knows it. But then one was portraying something entirely unknown to the reading public when one described the sea, and that is always precarious. And because, furthermore, I described it in verse, I had to confine myself to the most banal interpretations."<sup>42</sup> In the flush of composition, however, he had no doubt that the "Nordsee-bilder" were genuine in image and emotion.

When as a result of his stay at Cuxhaven in the summer of 1826, a second series of "Nordseebilder," appeared even more original and varied in contents than the first, he wrote to Merckel before publication, enclosing three poems from this cycle. "For the rest, you see that the three pictures are good, they reveal my progress in tragic humor." He promises that the second part is to contain many such strains.<sup>43</sup> The same letter also throws light on what he meant by the "banal interpretations," when he referred to these poems many years later. He asked Merckel to substitute in a few cases more appropriate forms, and in this connection justifies the use of the word *Metze*, "prostitute," in the "Untergang der Sonne," because "this plebeian word of abuse" gives the beautiful sun just the right touch of tragic compassion. "In the end it will have to perish on account of this marriage—*Sonnenuntergang*."<sup>44</sup>

As we have seen, he claimed no credit for the metrical form of these poems, the free verse of which he considered, if not

exactly created, had at least been popularized by Tieck and Robert; nevertheless, he characterized the contents as belonging to the most individual, the most personal that he had ever written.<sup>45</sup> He realized, with satisfaction, no doubt, that his talent was more versatile than the contemporary critics would allow: "So I am not limited, after all, by a merely lyric-malicious, two-strophied mannerism," he explained to Moser, with unconcealed satisfaction.<sup>46</sup> He expected, however that these poems would arouse little enthusiasm, chiefly because the "Usual sweet-water reader" will be made sea-sick by the very unusual, rocking meter.<sup>47</sup>

The *Nordsee II* was to be more original and more daring than the first part; with it he considered that he was opening a new path, with danger to his own life.<sup>48</sup> Perhaps he had in mind, in this last instance, the animosity that had been aroused in certain narrow-minded people by his figure of "Christ on the Water" in the Preceding series (*Nordsee I*, No. XII).<sup>49</sup> Whatever his doubts on the poetic value of the pictures in this collection, he did not waver in his feeling that it had broken new ground. "It is," he writes to Merckel Oct. 6, 1826, "extremely original, perhaps of not all too great value, but still noteworthy."<sup>50</sup> He was positive on the score of the attention and curiosity which this cycle was bound to cause.<sup>51</sup>

His friends suggested that he should publish a one volume edition of his poems. This was then issued in 1827 as the *Buch der Lieder*. To the Varnhagens he announced it as merely a collection of his "virtuous" poems.<sup>52</sup> In his heart, however, he appreciated fully the importance of this collection as a reflection and an adequate and comprehensive expression of his poetic personality. "This book," he wrote to Merckel when it was under preparation, "should be my outstanding book and should furnish a psychological picture of me,—the melancholy, serious poems of youth, the "Intermezzo" along with the "Heimkehr"; pure, blooming poems, as, for example, those from the *Harzreise*, and several new ones, and, finally, the colossal epigrams."<sup>53</sup>



One cannot help but recognize that while Heine was feeling his way uncertainly in prose, he was conscious of the distinction of his poetry, the core of which was the autobiographical element.

The several prefaces to later editions contain evidence of an outspoken affection for this leading work of his. In the Foreword to the second edition, written at Paris in 1837, he tells how, when he was reading over the material of the first edition after many years, he experienced some unhappiness from the revival of early memories that attended it. As is usual with him in the years of maturity when he feels his emotional balance endangered by a too powerful feeling, he opposes to it the defense of irony.

Only the poet or poetaster who looks on his first printed poems will understand this emotion. First poems! They must have been written on carelessly selected, faded sheets; here and there must lie withered flowers, or a blond lock of hair, or a piece of faded ribbon, and in many a place there must still be visible the traces of a tear. . . . First poems, however, which are printed, printed in glaring black type on horribly smooth paper, have lost their sweetest, most original charm and arouse in the author an awesome sense of discontent.<sup>54</sup>

This passage is simply additional evidence, of course, of his mastery of the effects of irony and satiric humour, and his use of these to shield his sensitive nature. In this case the shafts are directed at himself, for certainly no poet was ever more eager to see his poems in print than Heine had been. It should be borne in mind, also, that apart from his conscious or unconscious use of himself as a target for his self-defensive sallies, Heine was most certainly poking fun in his usual way at the over-indulgence in emotion on the part of the sentimental poets of the Suabian School. But if his mode of expression is satiric, this cannot hide the elegiac feeling that is its keynote. How genuinely sincere that was, we realize when we recall how intense had been the youthful experiences which provided the initial inspiration of the *Buch der Lieder*, and how pathetically far

away they must have seemed from his state of mind and position. For in 1837 he was held fast in the political agitations of the French Capital, and his poetic muse lay dormant.

Caustic, too, yet typical for Heine, is his reference, in the same Paris foreword, to the German muse as the good prostitute, "die deutsche Muse, die gute Dirne,"<sup>55</sup> in which affection and dissatisfaction are curiously blended.

Yes, ten years have now passed, [he continues] since these poems first appeared, and I present them, just as at that time, in chronological order. At the very beginning are found again the songs which were written in those earlier years when the first kisses of the German muse burned in my soul. Alas! the kisses of this good wench have since lost much of their ardor and freshness. . . . I have tampered with the poems themselves just as little as with their chronological order. Only here and there, in the first division, several verses were corrected.<sup>56</sup>

Evidently, in spite of the cynical references to the enthusiasm of youth, Heine held the *Buch der Lieder* in deep respect. As the soured and defeated peasant in Gottfried Keller's *Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe* unconsciously revered in his young son the ideals of his own lost youthful manliness, so the cynical man of the Paris boulevards and clubs was deterred by an unconfessed respect for the beauty of his early emotions from even the slightest change in their poetic record.

This is also the tenor of the "Preface" to the third edition of the *Reisebilder* (1839), which contains poems as well as prose. "In the latter (*Buch der Lieder*) I permitted myself neither a later revision nor any deviation from the chronological order."<sup>57</sup>

His reasons for refraining from altering the poems may perhaps be inferred from what Heine says in the "Preface" to the French edition of his poetical works, *Poèmes et Legendes* (Paris, 1855).

But let us return to the *Poèmes et Legendes* which are collected in this book. I have indicated above each part the date of its composition. It is a service for which critical investigators will be grateful,

who love to follow, in their study of a poet, the origins of his thought and to discover the secret tendencies of his spirit during the different phases of his life. My first lyric productions are to be found in the "Nocturnes," and date from 1816. They are the first four groups, and they belong to a cycle of mad visions. At the same epoch I wrote "les deux Grenadiers," and this juvenile production was printed at Berlin in 1822 in my first collection of poems. I make this chronological remark in order not to seem to be competing with an Austrian poet.<sup>58</sup>

In reality, the "Grenadiere" was written almost certainly in 1819 in Düsseldorf just before Heine left for the university at Bonn.<sup>59</sup> In dating the origin of the poem three years earlier, either his memory played him false or, which is more probable since we are dealing with Heine, he wished to call attention to his precocity. Perhaps he felt that his fame was more secure if he left unchanged this and other productions, by means of which his youthful genius had opened the door to popularity. Further than this, he must have felt that any change would imperil the arrangement by which the various cycles of lyrics keep step with the development of his life. "I have said that in the "Nocturnes," the French "Préface" continues, "are to be found the first babblings of the lyric poet; his last sighs, I was about to say his death rattle, are at the end of the volume in the form of lamentations which I have entitled the *Livre de Lazare*."<sup>60</sup>

The time of the "Vorrede" to the second edition of 1837, a period of pause in Heine's poetic creativeness anticipating the polemics of his *Börne*, suggests a reason for the emphasis which he placed on the definite connexion between his poetry and prose. "I must, however, remark," the "Vorrede" reads, "that my poetic, as well as my political, theological and philosophical writings are offsprings of one and the same thought, and that one may not condemn the one without withdrawing his approval from the others."<sup>61</sup>

With the issue of the *Buch der Lieder*, poetry faded into the background. New and exciting experiences absorbed all his

energies and brought with them the necessity for a record that could only take the form of prose. On the day the *Buch der Lieder* appeared he left Hamburg for his memorable journey to England. At the close of the year 1827 he arrived in Munich to edit, conjointly with Kolb, Cotta's literary supplement, *Die Politischen Annalen*. The sojourn of less than a year in the Bavarian capital, one of the most drab and depressing periods of his entire life, shows a low barometric reading in poetic productivity. His entire energy appears to have been sapped by the first steady literary task he had ever undertaken and by the strong party feeling prevailing in Bavarian politics. The sources enable us to follow his activities during this period with ease, but we learn nothing about his poetry.

The reaction came, however, when the Bavarian adventure had finally come to an end with humiliating disappointments. After he returned to North Germany again, a vague letter from Hamburg, (Oct. 13, 1829), to Moser indicates that his poetic muse was again at work: "How do you like the enclosed verses which I have written for the *Musen Almanach*, more out of nonchalant self-persiflage than to sting our little friends. . . . But do not entertain the idea that I haven't any more important things in my head than such bagatelles."<sup>62</sup> It was only in verse, it appears, that he could do justice to the bitterness that filled his soul. The sharp-edged poems to which he refers describe the miserable impression which Hamburg and, more particularly, its uninspiring natives, made on the poet after his pleasant experiences and contacts in Italy. Characteristic for his mood at the time is the last poem in the collection *Neuer Frühling*:

Himmel grau und wochentäglich!  
Auch die Stadt ist noch dieselbe!  
Und noch immer blöd' und kläglich  
Spiegelt sie sich in der Elbe.     •

Lange Nasen, noch langweilig  
Werden sie wie sonst geschneuzet,

Und das duckt sich noch scheinheilig  
Oder bläht sich, stolz gespreizet.

Schöner Süden! Wie verehr' ich  
Deinen Himmel, deine Götter,  
Seit ich diesen Menschenkehricht  
Wiederseh', und dieses Wetter! (Elster, I, 222)

The critical attention which Heine gave to his verse at this time is small, indeed, compared with that bearing on his prose of the same date. The tenor of the reference in the letter quoted above suggests a slackened interest in poetry, and this was, indeed, the case in 1829 and 1830. Other remarks at the same period indicate a deep pessimism regarding the possibility of his further progress as a poet. Was not his bolt shot, and could he hope to reach a higher level than he had touched in the *Buch der Lieder*? In 1829 he informed Moser that he had absolutely no poems for publication, at least none that were any better than what he had already written, that he would always know when to stop writing when he could no longer produce better results than the previous ones.<sup>63</sup> To Varnhagen, in February 1830, he wrote: "I have sternly denied myself all poetic sentiment and, much more, all dabbling in verse. Poetry is a matter of the past now; however, I shall therefore live the longer in prose."<sup>64</sup> This is not the first intimation of infidelity to poetry. Early in his career the idea seems to have haunted him that the writing of verse was incompatible with the serious occupations of life. In April 1822 he had written to Immermann: "After all, poetry is only a pretty side-issue."<sup>65</sup>

Even the most gifted poet cannot produce great work if each thread of his being is so interwoven with the distracting political and social life of his time as Heine's was in the years immediately preceding his removal to Paris. His remarks at this time indicate no lack of confidence in his ability to continue to write verse, but that his present disposition did not allow him the freedom and isolation that every artistic nature needs for great poetic work. He felt that his future lay in the field of prose.

That the cause for the drying of the poetic fountain lay rather without than within the poet is evidenced by a little collection that came into being in the last two years of his stay in Germany. This was the *Neuer Frühling*, written partly for the composer A. Methfessel as well as to glorify the Countess Bothmer. Although written to order, and in great haste, some of the poems of this collection seem as spontaneous and as emotionally genuine as any poem in the *Heimkehr* or the *Intermezzo*. In 1831 this group was added to the second edition of *Reisebilder II*.<sup>66</sup> The Preface is entirely apologetic, declaring that a stationary point had been reached in his development of this genre. He was aware, he acknowledged, that Germany suffered no lack of such lyric poems and that it was impossible to offer anything better than had been furnished by the older masters, especially by Uhland.<sup>67</sup>

It is undeniable that his literary vitality suffered greatly during 1830 and 1831, partly on account of the public's reaction to the Platen affair, partly due to his own precarious position in Germany. When he was giving so much valuable criticism to Immermann's *Tulifüntchen*, praising the author's lyric gift he announced that he had done with poetry.<sup>68</sup> The appearance of the *Neuer Frühling*, as we have seen, proved him in error. In the midst of daily irritations, squabbles with his publisher, opposition from his enemies, he steadfastly refused to see only the dark side of life. "These troubles will all pass away," he wrote, Nov. 30, 1830, "and a new spring will arrive, and in order that I may enjoy it without any reserve I am now composing the "Spring Songs" that go with it."<sup>69</sup>

There was an element of grim determination as well as of indomitable hope in the poet's breast during those last drear months in the homeland. It is, nevertheless, a far cry from the enthusiasm with which the youth had foretold to his friend Sethe the early publication of his first lyrical poems to the mood of 1831. In the record of self-evaluation which we have traversed, however, it will have been noted that the enthusiasm of

the young poet for his work was never of long duration. Each time that a rise of faith in himself comes, with the giving of his work to the public, such as at the conclusion of the *Lyrisches Intermezzo* or the issuance of the first volume of the *Reisebilder*, it is closely followed by a reaction and a loss of self-confidence. Some of this feeling must have been due to the impact of critical attack, for Heine never showed the lordly indifference to his critics that marks the attitude of Goethe or Byron. The main reason for this ebb and flow of valuation of his work lay in the rhythm of Heine's own nature. In the main he accepted (with a certain proud humility) those opinions that seemed to him just, such as the unfavorable comment on the monotony of theme in his early lyrics, and he sought to profit by the lesson. On the other hand, he was quite clear as to the particular merit of his lyrics and put his finger unerringly in advance of any criticism on the charm of the "Bergidylle" and the originality of the "Nordseebilder." That he passes so lightly over the songs of the "Neue Lieder" cycle is due less, perhaps, to a failure to recognize their grace and musical quality than to a feeling that lyrics of this character did not accord with the serious concerns of the day. For these occupied his mind increasingly and demanded the realism of prose.

## NOTES

### CHAPTER I

1. Hirth, I, 148.
2. Hirth, I, 153. To Friedrich Beughe, Bonn, July 15, 1820.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Hirt, I, 168. To Friedrich Steinmann, Göttingen, February 4, 1821: " . . . Du tust mir unrecht, wenn Du glaubst, daß ich an der Verzögerung der Herausgabe schuld bin. Ich habe dieselben von Brockhaus zurückerhalten mit der äußerst zierlichen und höflichsten Antwort: daß er gar zu sehr in diesem Augenblick mit Verlagsartikeln überladen sei."
5. Hirt, I, 160. Göttingen, November 7, 1820.
6. Hirt, I, 174. Berlin, Oct. 20, 1821.
7. Immermann's review appeared in the *Kunst-und Wissenschaftsblatte* of the *Rheinisch-Westfälischer Anzeiger*, No. 23, May 31, 1822, cf. Strodtmann's *Life of Heine*, 3 edition, Hamburg 1884, Vol. I, p. 200.
8. Hirt, I, 189. Berlin, Dec. 24, 1822. To Karl Immermann: " . . . Vielleicht gelang es mir in meiner nächsten poetischen Schrift, den Passepartout zu meinem Gemüthslazarette niedergelegt zu haben; eigentlich sind es doch nur wenige, für die man schreibt, besonders wenn man, wie ich getan, sich mehr in sich selbst zurückgezogen. Dieses Buch wird meine kleinen maliziös-sentimentalen Lieder . . . enthalten."
9. The forthcoming work was the *Tragödien nebst einem Lyrischen Intermezzo*.
10. Hirt, I, Einleitung, 97. "Er war ein dankbares Gemüt: wäre ihm nur das geringste Entgegenkommen bezeigt worden, so hätte er sich niemals zu Ausfällen verstanden, die ihm nicht innere Überzeugung diktierte."
11. Hirt, I, pp. 224-225.
12. Hirt, I, pp. 272-273. "Nur das Gemeine und Schlechte herrscht, und ich will diese Herrschaft nicht anerkennen . . ."
13. Hirt, I, p. 277. Lüneburg, Nov. 28, 1823: " . . . ich suche die



verschiedenartigsten Kenntnisse in mir aufzunehmen und werde mich in Folge desto vielseitiger und ausgebildeter als Schriftsteller zeigen. Der Poet ist bloß ein kleiner Teil von mir; ich glaube, du kennst mich hinlänglich, um dieses zu begreifen."

14. Hirt, I, 287. To Christiani, Göttingen, Jan. 26, 1824. "... Ich werde mir mühe geben, daß ich hier nicht von der poetischen Seite bekannt werde.

15. Hirt, I, 295. To Christiani, Göttingen, Feb. 29, 1824.

16. *Ibid.* It is to be noted these did not include any poems from the cycle *Nordsee*, which had their origin in the following year, 1825. Cf. Elster I, 521 ff., where the 33 poems that appeared in the *Gesellschafter* are listed.

17. Hirt, I, 300-301. To Gubitz, Göttingen, March 9, 1824.

18. Houben, H. H., *Gespräche mit Heine* (Frankfurt am Main: Literarische Anstalt Rütten and Loening, 1926). Adolf Stahr-Fanny Lewald: "'Das waren keine Grillen oder Launen,' versicherte Heine. (Ich habe alle solche grelle Dissonanzen mit entschiedenem oppositionellen Bewußtsein gegen die weichliche Gefühlseligkeit der Schwaben und Konsorten gemacht!)" (September, 1850, 744-745).

19. Hirt, I, 295. To Christiani, Göttingen, Feb. 29, 1825: "... Hilf Himmel, nicht allein, daß das Volk jene neue nonschalante Weise, worin ich jetzt dichte, nicht würdigen wird, so wird man außerdem mit Recht mir vorwerfen, daß ich jetzt Schwaches zu Markt bringe."

20. Cf. Bartels, Adolf: *Deutsche Literaturgeschichte*, II., 259 ff.; Also *Heinrich Heine, Auch ein Denkmal*, Dresden, 1906. Barthels' testimony is, of course, absolutely incompetent and unreliable.

21. Hirt, I, 297-298. To Christiani.

22. Hirt, I, 303. To Moses Moser, Göttingen, March 19, 1824: "... ich fühle mehr als je den Gott in mir und mehr als je die Verachtung gegen den großen Haufen."

23. *Ibid.*

24. Hirt, I, 319. To Friederike Robert and Ludwig Robert, Göttingen, May 27, 1824.

25. *Ibid.*

26. Hirt, I, 335-336. "... Es sollen auch Verse drin vorkommen,

- die Dir gefallen, schöne, edle Gefühle und dergleichen Gemüthskehricht. . . ."
27. Hirt, I, 346. To Ludwig Robert, Göttingen, March 4, 1825.
28. Hirt, I, 341. To Moses Moser, Göttingen, Jan. 11, 1825.
29. *Ibid.*
30. Elster, I, 100.
31. Hirt, I, 379. To Moses Moser, Norderney-Hamburg, Oct. 8, 1825: "... denn täglich nehme ich zu an poetischer Vielseitigkeit und Objectivität."
32. *Ibid.* "... Ich muß jetzt wieder sorgen, daß man mich preist ..."
33. Elster, I, 111.
34. Hirt, I, 397.
35. Hirt, I, pp. 420-421. To Wilhelm Müller, Hamburg, June, 7, 1826. Cf. Greinz, R. H., *Heinrich Heine und das deutsche Volkslied* Neuwied, 1894 ("Kultur-und Litteratur-bilder" 2).
36. Hirt, I, 425.
37. Hirt, I, 459, Lüneburg, Jan. 1, 1827.
38. Heine sketches the plan of contents to Moser, Dec. 14, 1825, Hirt, I, 392; for references to the writing of the poems, cf. *ibid.*, 378, 389.
39. Hirt, I, 393. Dec. 14, 1825.
40. Goethe: *Italienische Reise*. Meyers-Klassiker Ausgabe, XIV, 84.
41. Cf. Note 52.
42. Houben, *Gespräche*, p. 758. Adolf Stahr and Fanny Lewald. Oct. 1850.
43. Hirt I, 457; Jan. 1, 1827.
44. *Ibid.* "... Die 'Metze' lass' ich mir nicht nehmen, die muß stehen bleiben, und dieses plebejische Schimpfwort gibt eben der schönen Sonne das tragische Mitleiden—am Ende muß sie durch diese Ehe untergehen—'Sonnenuntergang'."
45. Hirt I, 393. To Moser, Verdammtes Hamburg, Dec. 14, 1825.
46. *Ibid.* "... ich bin also doch nicht auf eine bloss lyrisch-maliziöse zweystrophige Manier beschränkt."
47. Hirt I, 437. To Karl Simrock, Hamburg, May 26, 1826.
48. Hirt I, 437. To Moser, July 8, 1826.
49. Hirt I, 437. To Moser, Norderney, July 8, 1826: "Mein

Christus auf dem Wasser, XIItes Seebild, hat viel Unmut gegen mich erweckt." Cf. original version of the poem in Elster, I, Lesarten, p. 531.

50. Hirt I, 433. To Merkel. Lüneburg, Oct. 6, 1826.

51. *Ibid.* "... hier hab ich bereits acht große Seebilder geschrieben, höchst originell, vielleicht von nicht allzugroßem Wert, aber doch immer bemerkenswert; und ich stehe dafür, sie werden bemerkt werden."

52. Hirt, I, 480. To Varnhagen von Ense, Hamburg, Oct. 19, 1826: "... Das 'Buch der Lieder' ... ist nichts als eine tugendhafte Ausgabe meiner Gedichte."

53. Hirt, I, p. 453.

54. Elster, I, 496. *Vorrede zur zweiten Auflage.*

55. *Ibid.* "... Sie (die deutsche Muse) tröstete mich in heimischen Drangsalen, folgte mir ins Exil, erheiterte mich in bösen Stunden des Verzagens, ließ mich nie in Stich, sogar in Geldnot wußte sie mir zu helfen, die deutsche Muse, die gute Dirne."

56. *Ibid.*

57. Elster III, 509. *Reisebilder* (zweite und dritte Auflage, 1830 and 1840. Hoffmann und Campe). Vorwort. Cf. Elster I, 499: "Die *Poèmes et Legendes* zerfallen in folgende Abteilungen: Atta Troll—L'Intermesso—La Mer du Nord—Nocturnes—Feuilles Volantes—Germania—Romanzero—Le Livre de Lazare."

58. Elster, I, 500. *Préface.* "Mais revenons aux poèmes et legendes qui sont rassemblés dans ce livre. J'ai indiqué au-dessus de chaque partie la date de sa naissance. C'est un service dont me sauront gré les critiques investigateurs, qui aiment à poursuivre dans les ouvres d'un poète les origines de sa pensée et à découvrir les tendances secrètes de son esprit pendant les différent phases de sa vie. Mes premières productions lyriques se trouvent dans les "Nocturnes," et datent de 1816. Ce sont les quatre premiers morceaux, et ils appartenaient à un cycle de folles visions. A la même époque j'ai écrit "Les Deux Grenadiers," et cette production juvénile fut imprimée en 1822 à Berlin dans mon premier recueil des poésies. Je fais cette remarque chronologique pour n'avoir pas l'air de marcher sur les brisées d'un poète autrichien."

59. Cf. Elster, I, 39; also Strodtmann, Adolf: *Heinrich Heines Leben und Werke*, I, 55.

60. Elster I, 501. *Préface*. "... J'ai dit que dans les "Nocturnes" se trouvent les premiers vagissements du poète lyrique, ses derniers soupirs, j'allais dire son râle de mort, se trouvent à la fin de ce volume, dans une série de lamentations que j'ai intitulée le 'Livre de Lazare'."

61. Elster, I, p. 497 ff. Vorrede zur zweiten Auflage, *Buch der Lieder*.

62. Hirt, I, pp. 551 ff. To Moser, Oct. 13, 1829.

63. Hirt I, 545. To Moser, May 30, 1829, Potsdam: "... Ich werde immer zur rechten Zeit aufzuhören wissen, wenn ich in einer Gattung nichts Besseres, als das schon Geleistete, geben kann."

64. Hirt I, 579. To Varnhagen, Hamburg, Feb. 27, 1830.

65. Hirt I, 190. To Karl Immermann, Berlin, Dec. 24, 1822.

67. Elster III, *Reisebilder II*, "Vorwort," 1831, p. 521. "Ich übergebe sie um so anspruchsloser, da ich wohl weiß, daß Deutschland keinen Mangel hat an dergleichen lyrischen Gedichten. Außerdem ist es unmöglich in dieser Gattung etwas besseres zu geben, als schon von den älteren Meistern geliefert worden, namentlich von Ludwig Uhland, der die Lieder der Minne und des Glaubens so hold und lieblich hervorgesungen aus den Trümmern alter Burgen und Klosterhallen."

66. Twenty-four of the poems had appeared in the same year in the Stuttgart *Morgenblatt für Gebildete Stände*. Cf. Elster I, 535 ff.

68. Hirt I, 584. To Karl Immermann, Hamburg, March 14, 1830: "... Ich mache keine Gedichte mehr."

69. Hirt I, 632. To Varnhagen.

## CHAPTER II

### THE EARLY PROSE

HEINRICH LAUBE, Heine's literary comrade in arms, is quoted as saying, "Heine possessed an Olympian security in respect to his writings, and knew exactly what was best in them, no matter how violently the point had been disputed or ridiculed," . . . "he never lost this aristocratic trait of superiority, not even in the hours of deepest depression."<sup>1</sup> We have seen, in the thoughtful consideration that Heine bestowed on his verse, to what extent this comment of Laube's was justified. In judging his own prose, our author was also never at a loss for constructive criticism, whether it reflected unfavorably on the dark spots in his work, or whether it stamped, with a single phrase or two, the conscious excellence of his craftsmanship. There are exceptions, of course, such as we should expect from a temperament like Heine's. In the polemical works and passages the personal element often distorted his judgment. Once he was free from these restrictions upon unbiased thinking, he frankly admitted his errors, as we shall see in the case of the invectives in his book on Börne.

The year 1820 marked his entry into the prose arena with an article on romanticism. Outwardly impersonal, it applied as directly to himself as anything he ever wrote. For example, if one wishes an introduction to the *Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland*, one will find in these few pages the seed of the distinction between Nazarenic and Hellenic thought which grew to such importance in the work of his mature years. Christianity, to begin with, is presented as the turning point of classic art, the commencement of a new era which grew up under the auspices of the Christain church, flowered mightily in the Catholic Middle Ages, wilted sadly during the subsequent

upheavals brought on by the Reformation and the Thirty Years' War, and appeared once more in its pristine glory in the early nineteenth century. Such, he tells us, was romanticism.<sup>2</sup>

But the new romanticism, i.e., Heine's conception of it as an expression of his own program, was to free itself from the trammels of catholicism and feudal knighthood; in other words, it was to be brought up to date.<sup>3</sup> Herein, it may be said in passing, lies Heine's great service to German literature, as "the last of the romanticists." He liberated it from outworn symbols and substituted for them the experiences of daily life. Indeed the disharmony between the classic and romantic schools seemed, in his opinion, to be an outgrowth of political, social and religious issues rather than of aesthetic laws. The student of Heine will not have to proceed far into his writings before he realizes that these ideas crop up repeatedly, and must be regarded as the basis of his philosophy of literary history, in so far as he can be said to have had one.

Of the two short prose contributions of the year 1822 Heine spoke none too enthusiastically. The *Briefe aus Berlin*, besides being shamefully shorn by the censor, contained, he declares, traces of a pathological frame of mind,<sup>4</sup> and the article *Über Polen* was revised in 1825, rather on the advice of friends than from any conviction on the part of its author that it had literary merits.<sup>5</sup> The observer, nevertheless, can detect in these two relatively insignificant pieces motives and characteristics of the later *Reisebilder*.<sup>6</sup>

The year 1824 was an active one for his prose writing; it saw the origin of the "Harzreise," the beginning of the *Rabbi von Bacherach* and the third prose section of the *Nordsee*, and the continuation of the *Memoiren*, which were first mentioned in the preceding year.<sup>7</sup>

Apart from the verses in the *Harzreise*, of which he was justly proud, Heine was unwilling to admit that this work had much literary value. When he wrote to Moser that he must not expect too much from the new book, and that it had been written

primarily for "pecuniary and similar" reasons,<sup>8</sup> we hear clearly a ring of weariness in the words, a reaction to the strain of intense, creative work. Then, too, that the *Harzreise* was a real literary innovation, without precedent and pattern, may well have filled the jauntiest writer with trepidation. Many months lapsed before it saw print. This fact alone must have caused him endless worry, especially as the editor of the *Rheinblüthen*<sup>9</sup> kept it overlong and finally sent the manuscript back. After the work had left his hands, the young author was assailed by doubts and fears. It contained, he declared to Christiani, "many of my old jokes, gaily intermingled with many poor, new ones, careless, inartistic prose, awkward descriptions of nature, mis-carried enthusiasm."<sup>10</sup> Yet the autumn before when it was growing under his pen, he had boasted to another friend of the lively, enthusiastic style.<sup>11</sup> It is only with a skeptical smile that one can accept a confession of an inartistic style from a poet of whom Börne once said that "heaven and earth serve Herr Heine only as a canvass for the display of his beautiful, minute needlework."<sup>12</sup> Börne had in mind Heine's later prose, but a conscious attention to style is never absent from the early *Reisebilder*. It is true that the *Harzreise* does not display that nicety of expression which provides the chief charm of a work like *Ludwig Marcus*, written in the ripened prose style of 1844. The earlier work is filled with risqué words and coarse expressions, such as fitted the scheme of the story and the vocabulary of any young, spirited university student in Germany. With all its romantic meandering, it has a freshness which has exhilarated four generations of young readers.

Impatient with the editor of the *Rheinblüthen*, he can hardly wait for the appearance of the sketch. He pointed out to friend Robert the book's close association with the ideas of the times: "I write so little that is suitable for the present that, once I have hatched something of this kind, many family and public considerations press me not to delay its publication longer."<sup>13</sup>

His dissatisfaction with the original form of the *Harzreise*

led him to revise it; indeed, it was revised on five different occasions, the last time in 1837, before it had his final approval.<sup>14</sup>

On November 23, 1825 he sent to Gubitz the manuscript which the *Rheinblüten* had rejected. "I am convinced," he writes, that it will give extraordinary pleasure, especially the second half. I wrote it with great industry, then allowed it, as befits good writing, to lie idle for a year, and have again and again applied the file to it. I find that on account of the material and its light treatment it is adapted to our periodical," [the *Gesellschafter*].<sup>15</sup> This optimistic remark may have been less an expression of the author's conviction than a plea in order to gain the hearing of the publisher. Nevertheless, Heine was now able to see the work in some perspective and was no longer frightened by the novelty of its style and the frankness with which it attacked the Göttingen periwigs. The letter to Gubitz ended characteristically with the admonition not to change anything in the manuscript. This warning was echoed again and again in all his relations with publishers, notably with Campe during Heine's Paris exile. The poet felt that, as author and human being, he himself was altogether responsible for the fate of every written line, and we have here further evidence of the desire that works, to which he gave such earnest labor and devoted consideration, should come into the hands of the public in exactly the form which he had intended.<sup>16</sup> Vials of bitterness are poured out on the heads of the publisher, editor and censor when, as in the case of the first appearance of the *Harzreise*, he found his work mutilated by an alien pen.

Reviewing these diverse self-judgments of Heine's, it will be at once noticed how contradictory they are. This is almost certainly due to the lack of confidence of a writer who had excelled heretofore in poetry and was for the first time making a real, significant bid for recognition in prose. •

The *Harzreise*, together with the poems of the *Heimkehr* and the first *Nordsee* cycle, was originally published under the title of *Reisebilder I*. After the second edition some parts were



removed, others added: the important point is, however, that this was the beginning of the series of *Reisebilder*. Taken in conjunction with what he had said of the *Harzreise*, his opinion of the first volume of the *Reisebilder* could not have been serenely confident. More than anything else, he declares to Varnhagen, when forwarding him the work in May 1826, the desire for fame,<sup>17</sup> and dissatisfaction with the *Harzreise* as it appeared in the *Gesellschafter*<sup>18</sup> have driven him to publish this volume. "I had to publish something, and then I thought, even if the book is not a great work, at any rate, what it contains can by no means be called poor."<sup>19</sup> To Karl Simrock he expresses himself with something of the same mock-modesty. With a complimentary copy goes the confession: "From the contents you will see that it is not calculated to arouse curiosity, and that it does not propose merely to play on the interests of the day; for that reason I have eliminated everything polemical from it, although I am itching to express my opinion once, especially on literature."<sup>20</sup>

If Heine were not overpleased with the first volume of *Reisebilder*, the explanation is in black and white in these lines. The desire was strong in him to assume a polemical rôle in the political "Parteikampf" for which *Jung Deutschland* was sharpening its sword. The *Harzreise* was too fragile a weapon to be employed in that conflict. Harz Mountain idyls and university quips were relics of an outgrown youthful enthusiasm. He was already weighing the possibilities of gaining for himself that intellectual voice to which all Germans would be obliged to listen. To Varnhagen and Simrock, in the letters mentioned above, he set forth his program. Because the reading public was attracted only by the ordinary and second-rate, and because contemporary writers, wavering uncertainly between the lodestones of classic and romantic German art, were threshing over old straw, he intended to scourge without restraint such wretched conditions, although he felt that this might turn the leading voices of the day against him forever.<sup>21</sup> This sounds like the impulsiveness of

a child, but the prophecy held true in great measure. "Such action is necessary, few only have the courage to say all; I have no longer any fear of expressing myself openly, and you (Varnhagen) shall see the miracle of miracles. The *Wiener Jahrbücher* have had a good influence upon me in this direction."<sup>22</sup> Simrock was told that the next publication was to effect in prose what this friend had accomplished with his *Xenien* in hexameter verse.<sup>23</sup>

The second part of the *Reisebilder* appeared, then, in the spring of 1827. A nervous excitability, an expectant tension completely controlled him months before the publication date, ending in his sudden departure for England to wait for the storm to blow over. In addition to the *Buch Le Grand*, the book was to contain a potpourri of everything, to be served up in the form of letters, in which he intended to speak "about all matters and then some"<sup>24</sup> and to which he invited his friends to contribute.<sup>25</sup> It was no longer a question of "L'art pour l'art," but of political and social "Tendenz." It was just at this point that Heine committed apostasy, in attempting to make literature the handmaid of politics, although he thought to serve indirectly thereby the cause of literature. The ground for this change had been in a state of preparation for a long time. That it was a desperate move, no one knew better than the author himself. In his attitude there was both self-justification and rationalization. In any case, he had chosen his rôle and intended it to be that of an Aristophanes in the German Attica. "They have forced me to take to the sword. . . . Truly, my *position* (the italics are the present writer's) never favored my development into a singer of soft love ballads."<sup>26</sup> There was also a feeling of indifference, as far as literary quality was concerned: "You may expect much that is daring; but whether it is good or not is another matter. In any case, you shall see that I speak freely and nobly, and chastise evil, no matter how revered and powerful it may be."<sup>27</sup>

He calculated that *Le Grand* would cause a furor, not because

it exposed private scandal, but because it featured significant European interests, such as Napoleon and the French Revolution "in life size."<sup>28</sup> To be sure, when the work was out, his usual reaction appeared in the form of self-distrust, and a less favorable opinion was voiced in a letter to Moser: the book was only "nourishment for the rabble."<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, in so far as it was a worthy and timely challenge to the powers of reaction it would provide him with a draft on future prestige, so that he would one day "acquire a full professorship in the university of exalted minds,"<sup>30</sup> words that have become justly famous. This end could only be attained if he aligned himself with the progressive liberal party. "I have now a far-reaching voice," he continued, "you shall often hear it thunder at the myrmidons of thought and the oppressors of most sacred rights."<sup>31</sup> He parried hostile criticism with the sagacious remark that one would have to be absolutely free of obligation to the state to pass fair judgment on *Le Grand*.<sup>32</sup>

Heine felt called upon to clear his conscience in regard to the *Reisebilder II*, especially since the *Briefe aus Berlin*, of which he had no high opinion, were added to disarm the censors by providing a regulation number of pages. Before the censorship authorities placed an absolute ban on the writings of Heine and the rest of the *Jung Deutschland* coterie, it was generally understood that a publication containing the minimum number of twenty printed sheets would not have to be submitted to the censor. Books of less than the required number of sheets were looked upon as pamphlets or brochures, in which case they were treated as ordinary agitative, polemical literature, and were severely censored.<sup>33</sup> Commenting on his action, Heine wrote to Moser: "So in that dilemma I was in a position similar to Benvenuto Cellini's, when he did not have enough bronze for the casting of *Perseus*, and in order to fill the mold, threw all the tin plates he had into the smelting furnace. It was indeed easy to distinguish the tin, especially the tinny end of the book, from the better bronze."<sup>34</sup> In a note to the first edition of *Reisebilder*

II of 1827 he referred again to the internal and external difficulties attending the publication of this series.

The writer is often in a dilemma; all-supreme external conditions may demand that a book which he wishes to send into the world shall contain over twenty printed sheets, whereas he is only able to fill half of it with his good 'Ideas.' 'Hannoverian Nobility' and 'Letters from Berlin' are then carried along as ballast. Thus it may happen that in the second part of the *Reisebilder* not everything is delivered that was promised in the concluding note of the first part," [to which he adds, in his witty fashion,] "as, for example, printer's errors."<sup>35</sup>

The third volume was soon under way. In October 1827 he observed that, while the last book turned out to be a man-of-war with too many cannon on board, the third one "shall be still more startlingly provided for, the caliber of the cannon shall be larger, and I have invented an entirely new kind of powder for it. It shall not carry as much ballast as the second volume."<sup>36</sup>

Begun in 1827, the *Reise von München nach Genua* was written partly in Italy, partly in Potsdam after the author's return from the south; the notorious companion-piece, *Die Bäder von Lucca*, was written entirely during the Potsdam sojourn. Both appeared in the third volume of the *Reisebilder*. If his associates and the public at large entertained the idea that his animosity toward the nobility and the church had been softened by friendly relations with their representatives in Munich they were sadly mistaken.<sup>37</sup> Already at the Bagni di Lucca, before the worst of the Italian sketches had been conceived or written, he foresaw that his program was one-sided, "but in order to act, one must be one-sided."<sup>38</sup> To his mind, action was necessary above all things. Not personal considerations but the welfare of mankind was at stake.<sup>39</sup> In Italy the outlines of the clever, but venomous, satire had not yet taken definite shape; rather, he conceived it at that time as an amusing, picaresque, sentimental travel-book *à la mode* (from Potsdam he wrote

Moser to send him a copy of Sterne's masterpiece), gentle, and, for the most part, mild.<sup>40</sup>

That the book which did most to damage his young fame should be forecast in such harmless language is astonishing until one considers Heine's statement in the light of the preceding volume of the *Reisebilder*. Extremely personal in tone, the *Reise von München nach Genua* was, nevertheless, more mild and less challenging than the second volume in its treatment of European political affairs. The expression of his admiration for Napoleon, for example, was this time much more subdued than in *Le Grand*, as Elster points out.<sup>41</sup> Heine spoke of his moderation in political matters even after the Platen pasquille had been added:<sup>42</sup> "Well, the tone of the book is tame, not in the least demagogic—as a matter of fact it is good Russian, which is the same now as Ultra-Prussian."<sup>43</sup> Even the attack on Platen he regards as mild, at least in form: "He (Platen) reviled me, and I have avoided using harsh words, *suaviter in modo, fortiter in re*."<sup>44</sup> It was not a book of "Ideas," nor did its author consider its polemical character outstanding. It was a book of personal retribution and invective, although we shall observe presently that he rested his defense of it upon its treatment of the weighty problems of the day.

The state of Heine's mind at the time of writing the "Bäder von Lucca" harmonized completely with the malicious vehemence of his attack on Platen, and must definitely be reckoned with for a full understanding of this attack. In this connection a letter to Friederike Robert is illuminating:

... I am beginning anew with the "Italienische Reise," which is to occupy the third part of the *Reisebilder* and in which I shall pronounce judgment on all my enemies. I have made a list of all those who have tried to hurt my feelings, in order that I may forget none of them in my present state of softness. Ah! Sick and miserable as I am, almost to the point of self-mockery, I am now describing the most brilliant period of my life, a period when I exulted on the peaks of the Apennines, intoxicated with joy and the delights of

love, and dreamed of great, wild deeds that would spread my fame over the entire earth as far as the most distant island, where in the evening the boatman should tell of me by the fireside; and now . . . how tame I have become.<sup>45</sup>

Heine was so afflicted in mind and body at the time that his mental state at any particular moment conditioned the degree of vehemence in his satire. If he were depressed, the need for some sort of compensation or an emotional outlet added potency to the maliciousness of his writing, that characteristic blend of acid wit and sweeping sarcasm which one would, after all, not care to miss from his work.

The book aroused a protest, which ultimately, by indirect channels, hounded him out of Germany. The poet saw his mistake:

No one feels more deeply than I do [he declared to Varnhagen after the storm broke upon him], that I have injured myself beyond description by the Platen chapter, that I should have handled the matter differently, and that I have wounded the public, and of this the better part, but I feel at the same time that with all my talent I was unable to produce anything better, and that I had to establish a precedent, cost what it might.<sup>46</sup>

He was entirely ready, however, in his own defense. He was accused of having subjected literature to perversive uses, a thing unprecedented until that time. The following often-quoted lines in the same letter to Varnhagen were an acceptance of the challenge.

Then again the charge that I have done what is unheard of in German Literature—as if the times were still the same! The Schiller-Goethe *Xenien* war was only a sham battle. It was the “Kunstperiode”; art, the reflection of life, not life itself, was uppermost in importance, now it is a question of the supreme interests of life itself; the Revolution has entered literature, and the war is becoming more serious. With the exception of Voß, perhaps I am the only representative of this revolution in literature, but the demonstration was necessary in every respect. I do not think that

I will have many followers here, as in the case of my poems, for the German is by nature servile, and the cause of the people is never the popular cause in Germany. . . . I say this because in the Platen episode I wish to make no claim to a bourgeois crown; primarily, I was looking out for myself, but the motives for this affair originated in the universal warfare of our day.<sup>47</sup>

Numerous letters, including the dedicatory letter to Immermann of the 17th of November, 1829, carried the defense even further. They are intensely personal letters, but the tiring though sincere effort at self-justification throws little light on the artist's opinion of his work as literature. Their predominating keynote is suggested by such captions as "C'est la guerre! It was no longer a question of a jesting tourney, but of a war of annihilation,"<sup>48</sup> and "even the timely theme has its value."<sup>49</sup> It will be noticed that the more Heine was drawn into the polemical arena, the less literary and specific his self-criticism. His literary judgments became so closely interwoven with the "Zeitinteressen" that it is hard to disentangle them.

While he may have been convinced of the necessity of his book, he did not rate it as highly as *Le Grand*. He apologized to Moser for not presenting him with a better work, calling the third volume of the *Reisebilder* a mere bagatelle.<sup>50</sup> He hoped that Varnhagen would be able to do something for it in Berlin,<sup>51</sup> and that Moser would derive enough amusement from the reading to compensate for the ennui.<sup>52</sup> He was naturally worried over the extent of the hostility aroused by the Platen controversy. There are numerous letters of the year 1830 that evidence this anxiety. Heine's reaction to the whole affair reveals how little the third volume of the *Reisebilder* gave evidence of that impervious security and deliberate pride that an author who has written beyond and above the interests of his day guards as most inviolable insignia of his genius.

Though he wrote of its defects, he was aware of the merits of this latest production. "You will see," he wrote to Moser while the work was yet on the stocks, "that I am not writing in the

rut of my old style, but in a new free form."<sup>53</sup> What was this new, free form? We shall find some solution to the question in a few lines addressed to Varnhagen at the beginning of 1830: "First of all I wish that the *Bäder von Lucca* may give you pleasure with their plastic figures. My Hyazinth is the first fully-born character that I have created in life-size. In comedy as well as in the novel I shall try to do such creative work again."<sup>54</sup> It was, indeed, the first time that Heine had attempted to portray human beings who could live independently of his own extremely subjective personality. One thinks of the inimitable Hirsch Hyazinth discoursing on the merits of the three religions, or of the Marquis de Gumpelino, the standard type of a great army of culture seekers, and regrets that never afterward did Heine, in spite of his intentions, attain to that chiseled perfection in modeling human character.

Upsetting and damaging as this experience was, Heine was nevertheless soon at work on the fourth volume of the *Reisebilder*: the *Stadt Lucca* and the *Englische Fragmente*. "Perhaps," he wrote Carl Herloszohn, "you will soon receive from me a book, in which I stroke the feelings of the public urgently, entirely against the grain. . . . Whoever feigns Christian sentiments before it (the public) and at the same time has a little talent, can easily win its good will."<sup>55</sup> Heine had not changed. He was again preparing to scourge the reactionary church and nobility, although this time with a less personal, and more justly calculated attack.

In the foreword of the book he informed the public that the *Bäder von Lucca* and *Stadt Lucca* originated at the same time. The latter, he declared, was in no sense to be taken for an individual picture, but rather as the conclusion of a period of the author's life which coincided at the same time with the conclusion of a world period.<sup>56</sup> This was intended, of course, as a bit of hocus-pocus to mystify the public. He wished his readers to believe that both books issued simultaneously from a definite period in his life, a period which now, two years later, had been



outlived. It was to his advantage to maintain this pose before them, because in removing the suspicion that the polemical, personal tone of his prose was of recent date, it was intended to show that the animosity which was latent in the *Bäder von Lucca* had entirely died out by this time. A letter to Varnhagen is sufficient evidence of Heine's artifice: "You will not be deceived by my public "Fore-and Afterword," in which I pretend that the book is entirely of an earlier date. In the first half about three sheets are old; in the second only the concluding article is new."<sup>57</sup>

He referred to it as a book contributing to the progress of his age.<sup>58</sup> As if he foresaw that his enemies would pounce upon him for picking only two specific butts for his concentrated attack, instead of marshalling his forces against many, he explained and justified his method to Varnhagen long before the fourth part came out. "The book is intentionally one-sided. I know very well that the Revolution embraces all social interests and that nobility and church are not its only enemies. But, for greater objectivity, I have represented these as the only allied forces that are hostile to it, in order that my attack may be consolidated."<sup>59</sup>

The form of the *Englische Fragmente* was as peculiar to the nineteenth century as the drama was to the Elizabethan age. In the feuilleton European writers of the post-revolutionary years had discovered a vehicle for expression which was adequate to the hurried flow of modern life. Its literary parentage can be traced to the ordinary news article, and to the innumerable collections of "letters" on political, social, literary and artistic topics, of eighteenth century origin, which every traveled person had to write and every cultured person to read. A contemporary of Heine, Prince von Pückler-Muskau, won considerable popularity in this genre with his *Briefe eines Verstorbenen* (1830). No other literary species has, perhaps, sunk as low as the feuilleton at times. Born out of the temper of a particular period, appealing to contemporary interests, and reaching its public almost exclusively through the medium of the daily

press, it is almost always certain to show signs of wear and tear. The *Englische Fragmente*, while not the first, are certainly the best of their kind. The credit for establishing the *feuilleton* as a literary medium actually belongs to Jean Paul. Ludwig Börne, a disciple and follower of Jean Paul, essayed a similar type of writing in the *Briefe aus Frankfurt* (1821) and more particularly in the *Briefe aus Paris* (1832-1834). Heine's first attempts in the *feuilleton* style, his *Briefe aus Berlin*, certainly owe much in content and form to Börne's earlier *Briefe*,<sup>60</sup> but it was Heine's own intimate, racy prose that was to furnish a model for future writers in this genre.<sup>61</sup> Not only are the *Fragmente* good reporting, but they rise above the needs of the day to the level of genuine literary excellence. Heine was well aware of the originality of the *Fragmente*, "the style of which is not all too richly represented in our literature."<sup>62</sup> He also counted on the scarcity of books in German on England for their success.<sup>63</sup> Heine's later *feuilletons*, such as the *Französische Zustände*, often uninspired, made-to-order articles, with only here and there a flash of wit or a charming phrase, illustrate most vividly the snares that beset the *feuilleton* writer.

All in all, he seems to have sent forth the fourth volume of the *Reisebilder* with a conviction that it would make a noise in the world. Remarking on the general tone of the work, published early in 1831, he wrote to Varnhagen from Hamburg on the day of its receipt from the printer: "The book is stronger in its expression than in what is expressed; it is only agitative, and I don't have to be afraid of the text, if they want to hold anything against me. I am only afraid that they will entrench themselves behind the clergy and seek to condemn the book in the name of religion. If that happens, well, then I'll give them the entire score of the grand opera."<sup>64</sup> A few days later he wrote to Wilhelm Häring (Willibald Alexis) that his latest book was making its way and creating an explosion everywhere, adding that it would not surprise him much if he had suddenly to take to his heels.<sup>65</sup>

Though the satire in the fourth volume of the *Reisebilder* was much milder and less personal than in the preceding, protest and hostility were voiced in all quarters. Firm and convinced of the virtue of his cause, the author was ready to face the music. "If my book contributes to the emancipation of feelings in religious matters in Germany," he writes Varnhagen during the preparation of the work for the press, "where the people is religious to the core, I shall be happy, and gladly endure the trials which await me from the protestations of the pious."<sup>66</sup> It was unfortunate that this book followed so soon upon the heels of the previous one that the public had not found time to forget its irritation. Certainly Heine had antagonized many people and groups in Germany, but it is equally certain that he was unnecessarily alarmed for his personal safety, either because he overestimated the provocative nature of his prose, or because he was haunted by a persecution mania. On the latter subject modern psychology could provide some interesting commentaries.

The bitter attacks which had been directed against the third volume of the *Reisebilder* had their effect, and this is evidenced quite definitely by the revision which Heine undertook in preparing a second edition of the first three volumes. A paragraph in a letter to Varnhagen, written June 16, 1830, from Wandsbeck, relative to this revision, shows the author's state of feeling. It is characteristic also of the clear-cut precision of his literary methods. It sums up, too, in a very abbreviated fashion, the author's views of the prose series.

I can send you in six weeks the second edition of the first volume of the *Reisebilder*. The alterations that I undertook in it are certainly evidence of my inner humility and my affection for the better things; among the 88 poems of the *Heimkehr* I have eliminated those that might appear repugnant to the weak in the country, and I am substituting for them a most virtuous variety. The Spanish Romances and the hard iambics that follow I am suppressing altogether; in the *Harzreise* I have removed whatever

was too coarse, and I have filled the space hereby saved with the second part of the *Reisebilder*. The book gains thereby in symmetry and presentability. In the second volume I shall substitute for the missing *Seebilder* and the *Briefe aus Berlin*, which I am throwing out, the impressions of England which you already are acquainted with. In the third volume the "Count" (i.e. Platen) shall also be thrown out, and therewith, I imagine, the *Reisebilder* will make a respectable presentation.<sup>67</sup>

As the years passed and gave perspective to the *Reisebilder*, the impression deepened on him that he had sinned against good taste in some of their parts. While Heine always seems to have his tongue in his cheek when he apologizes, nevertheless, passages like that just quoted, and others to be cited below, and above all, his revisions, attest to the genuineness of his regrets. Thus the desire to soften the more outspoken portions of the series is apparent in the "Préface" to the French edition of the *Reisebilder* (1834) and in the "Vorrede" to the last French edition (1858), which was, to all appearances, written in the winter of 1855-56, but never incorporated in this edition.<sup>68</sup> The contrast in tone between his remarks and letters to German friends while he was still in Germany and his prefatory words to the French public some years later is instructive and amusing. When Heine addressed his French readers, his language dropped the querulous contentiousness of the letters to Varnhagen and Immermann quoted above, and unfolded itself with the bland bonhomie of an incurable sinner who, while conscious of his sins, is nevertheless willing to pass them over with unconcerned complacency. In the following passage there is even a touch of the burlesque of showmanship, to which the French temper is proverbially partial.

This book is a side-show [the *Preface* of 1834 reads], enter, have no fear. I am not as wicked as I appear to be. I have only painted my face with such hideous colors the better to terrify my enemies in battle. At bottom I am as tender as a lamb. Reassure yourselves and give me your hand. My weapons, too, you may touch, even

the quiver and the arrows, because I have dulled their points, just as we savages are accustomed to do when we approach a consecrated spot. Among ourselves, these arrows were not only sharp but well poisoned also. But today they are entirely benign and inoffensive, and you can amuse yourselves by gazing at their multi-colored feathers. Your children might even employ them as toys.<sup>69</sup>

The "Préface" continued to outline the aim of the translation, thus giving the author an opportunity to speak more directly and critically of his work. The style, the links in the thought, the transitions, the brusque sallies, the exotic expressions, in short, the entire character of the German original has been reproduced, he tells us, as much as possible, word for word in this French translation. Good taste, elegance, amiability and harmony have everywhere been sacrificed mercilessly to a literal fidelity. . . . It is now, he declares, a German book in the French language, a book which does not pretend to please the French public but to acquaint it with the singularity of the foreign temper. In a word, he wishes to instruct, if not to please. . . .<sup>70</sup> He accounts here for the suppression of the *Nordsee III*, for the elimination of much material from the *Englische Fragmente*, and for the softening of his onslaughts against the church in the *Stadt Lucca*.<sup>71</sup> In concluding he conjures up before us once more the *Zeitgeist* of the febrile years when the *Reisebilder* were conceived. It was a period, he goes on to say, when political oppression had established a universal silence in Germany, when the spirit of men had despaired of a victory for liberty in measure as the party of the aristocracy and of the clergy was aroused against him. Against these two champions of the past he alone had maintained a polemical warfare. "But since then," he concludes, "I have journeyed further along the road of progress, and my good Germans who, aroused by the cannon of July, followed in my traces and speak at the present the language of 1789, or even of 1793, are still so distant from me that they have lost sight of me and imagine that I have remained behind. *I am accused of moderation.* . . ."<sup>72</sup>

In the "Vorrede," to the last French edition a further willingness to retract original statements, or, at least, regret for not being in a position to do so, is apparent. He refers to the foolish as well as blasphemous passages in it as poisonous weeds that continue to thrive and cannot be uprooted without destroying the entire spiritual forest in which they root. He desired them to remain blooming monuments of his blunderings. "But as for me, I fold my hands reverently as old sinners do when nothing remains to them but regret and renunciation."<sup>73</sup>

In the contest with intolerance and special privilege he made one more move before he left Germany. It was the "Einleitung" to *Kahldorf über den Adel*. In a few, clear and unforgettable words he explains its origin to Varnhagen, April 1, 1831:

When I noticed, after July of the foregoing year [date of the Paris Revolution] how the liberal cause suddenly gained so many followers, indeed, how the oldest Swiss guards of the old regime suddenly cut up their red jackets to make Jacobin caps of them, then I thought I would retire and write artistic novelettes. But when the affair cooled off, and when terrorist reports, albeit false ones, arrived from Poland, and the criers of freedom muffled their voices, then I wrote an introduction to a book on the nobility. . . .<sup>74</sup>

The "Einleitung" was written in March 1831. Again the motives for writing were political and polemical, not literary. Heine found himself, at this time, emotionally and intellectually on the crest of the wave. Similar ammunition to that which he had fired off against conservatism and the aristocracy in the *Reisebilder* was used again, only in more concentrated form. Count Moltke's theory, as expressed in the book, was that the nobility, by right of birth, wider culture and other qualifications, was preëminently endowed to rule the less privileged classes. Besides containing much sparkling wit and acid satire, the "Einleitung" attacked the Count especially for the half-knowledge displayed in his presentation of the case, and insinuated that Germany needed a constitution to hold in leash Frederick Wilhelm III and his all too daring Junkers.<sup>75</sup> He nourished no illu-

sions as to the stylistic quality of this work, in which he suspected that he had "galloped a little too far, influenced by the distress of the times,"<sup>76</sup> and which he begged his friend Varnhagen to treat indulgently on account of its "intentional lack of caution," and the "anxiously rapid, bad style."<sup>77</sup>

The following summer he had occasion to meet Count von Moltke in Paris. Soon afterwards he sent him an apology for his attack. The "Einleitung," he admits, had been unfortunately written in haste and rage, and it was possible that he would be obliged to disclaim the article in this form. He asks pardon if he has not treated Count von Moltke with sufficient moderation.<sup>78</sup> Subsequently, in a note to Article IX of the *Französische Zustände*, written in October, 1832, Heine recounted the facts of his meeting with Moltke in Paris, and commended the latter in a letter for his gallantry in not wishing to see a pen-warfare unfold between them.<sup>79</sup> A reconciliation was the more easily effected, as Moltke himself had gone over to the liberal party in the early thirties, and as Heine now discovered in him the type of man "who didn't deserve to be treated in the "Einleitung" to the Kahldorff letters like the average nobleman."<sup>80</sup> How much less personal and more just his criticism had become in the course of one year amid changed surroundings! Perhaps he now recalled the poignant sadness of the lines in his *Stadt Lucca*: "Ah! Truly one should not write against any one in this world. Each is ill enough in this great hospital. . . ."<sup>81</sup>

## NOTES

### CHAPTER I

1. Houben, Gespräche, 346.
2. Elster, 7, 150. "So entstand die sogenannte romantische Poesie, die in ihrem schönsten Lichte im Mittelalter aufblühte, späterhin vom kalten Hauch der Kriegs- und GlaubensStürme traurig dahinwelkte und in neuerer Zeit wieder lieblich aus dem deutschen Boden aufsproßte und ihre herrlichsten Blumen entfaltete."
3. *Ibid*, 151.
4. Hirt I, 181. To Keller, Sept. 1822.
5. Hirt I, 393. To Moser, Hamburg, Dec. 14, 1825: "Ich selbst zwar hab' nie einen großen Wert darauf gelegt (Du gar keinen), aber Andre versichern mich, daß es seines Gehalts wegen wichtig sei. . . ."
6. Cf. Elster, I, 35: "Dagegen haben wir in den 'Briefen aus Berlin' 'und in dem Aufsatz' 'Über Polen' Vorläufer der *Reisebilder* zu erkennen."
7. Hirt I, 204. To Immanuel Wohlwill, Berlin, April 7, 1823.
8. Hirt I, 366. To Moser, July 1, 1825.
9. Hirt, I, 380 ff. To Friederike Robert, Lüneburg, Oct. 12, 1825.
10. Hirt I, 362. To Christiani, May 26, 1825. Göttingen.
11. Hirt I, 338. To Moser, Göttingen, Oct. 30, 1824. "Diese schreibe ich in einem lebendigen, enthusiastischen Styl. . . ."
12. Börne, Ludwig, Gesammelte Schriften, IV, 261.
13. Hirt I, 381. Oct 12, 1825.
14. Elster VII, 647. According to Elster, the *Harzreise* was revised in April and May 1825 for the first time, then again in October of the same year, then in the spring of 1826, again in 1830 and finally in 1837.
15. Hirt I, 388.
16. Hirt I, pp. 357-8. To Fr. Robert, May 15, 1825: "Denn da diese im subjektivsten Style geschrieben ist, mit meinem Namen in der Welt erscheint, und mich also als Mensch und Dichter verantwortlich macht, so kann ich dabei eine fremde Willkürlich-



keit nicht so gleichgültig ansehen wie bei namenlosen Gedichtchen, die zur Hälfte reduziert werden."

17. Hirt I, pp. 412-413. To Varnhagen.

18. *Ibid.* "Aber was soll ich tun, ich mußte etwas herausgeben, und da dachte ich, wenn das Buch auch kein allgemeines Interesse anspricht und auch kein großes Werk ist, so ist doch alles, was drin ist, auf keinen Fall schlecht zu nennen. Dann auch misfiel mir die *Harzreise im Gesellschafter*. . . ."

19. *Ibid.*

20. Hirt I, 416. Hamburg, May 26, 1826.

21. Hirt I, pp. 412-413. To Varnhagen, Hamburg, May 14, 1826: "Ich bin in dieser Hinsicht besorgt . . . weil ich im zweiten Band der *Reisebilder* über solche Misere rücksichtslos sprechen werde, und es mit den öffentlichen Stimmführern auf immer verderben werde."

22. *Ibid.*

23. Hirt I, 412-413. Hamburg, May 14, 1826.

24. Hirt I, 412-413. May 1826.

25. *Ibid.* "Haben Sie daher in dieser Hinsicht irgend einen besonderen Wunsch, wünschen Sie eine bestimmte Sache ausgesprochen zu sehen, so sagen Sie es mir, oder, was noch besser ist . . . u.s.w."

26. Hirt I, 450. To Christiani, Lüneburg, middle of November, 1826.

27. Hirt I, 456. To Joseph Lehmann, Lüneburg, Dec. 16, 1826.

28. Hirt I, 459. To Merckel, Lüneburg, Jan. 10, 1827.

29. Hirt I, 468. To Moser, London, June 9, 1827.

30. *Ibid.*, 468-9.

31. *Ibid.*

32. Hirt I, 464. To Varnhagen, London, May 1, 1827: "Ich weiß sehr gut, man muß staatsfrei gestellt sein, wenn man über meinen Legrand sich äußern will."

33. Cf. Proelß, Johannes, *Das Junge Deutschland*, Stuttgart, 1892, p. 65.

34. Elster III, 502. *Englische Fragmente*.

35. Elster III, 522.

36. Hirt I, 482, Lüneburg, Oct. 30, 1827. To Moser.

37. Hirt I, 525. To Moser, Lucca, Sept. 15, 1828: "Man glaubt in

München, ich würde jetzt nicht mehr so sehr gegen den Adel losziehen . . . aber man irrt sich. Meine Liebe für Menschengleichheit, mein Haß gegen den Clerus war nie stärker wie jetzt, ich werde fast dadurch einseitig."

38. *Ibid.*

39. *Ibid.* Cf. also letter to Varnhagen, of a later date, Feb. 1830. Hirt I, 575 ff.

40. Hirt I, 528. To Schenk, Florenz, Oct 1, 1828. Also, Hirt I, 540. To Moser, Potsdam, April 22, 1829.

41. Elster says, in his Einleitung to *Reisebilder III* (Vol. III, p. 200); "Aber im ganzen hatte er doch recht, wenn er glaubte, in betreff der Polemik zahmer gewesen zu sein als vorher. Seine Äußerungen über Napoleon in Kap. 29-31 der 'Reise von München nach Genua' sind viel ruhiger und kritischer als früher im zweiten Bande der *Reisebilder*. Diese Mäßigung dürfte dem Einflusse Varnhagens zuzuschreiben sein."

42. The attack on Platen begins in Chapter III of the "Reise von München nach Genua" (Elster III, 220), a part of the work which appeared in the *Morgenblatt* in December 1828; but the bitter attack in the "Bäder von Lucca" was not written until nearly a year later, when the earlier part of this volume of the *Reisebilder* was already in press (Elster III, 199).

43. Hirt I, 555. To Karl Immermann, Hamburg, Nov. 17, 1829.

44. Hirt I, 569. To Varnhagen, Hamburg, Jan. 3, 1830.

45. Hirt I, 544-545. To Fr. Robert, May 30, 1829.

46. Hirt I, 575-576. To Varnhagen, Hamburg, Feb. 4, 1830.

47. *Ibid.*

48. Hirt I, 562. To Immermann (no date): "C'est la guerre! Es galt kein scherzendes Turnier, sondern Vernichtungskrieg. . . ."

48. Hirt I, 552. To Moser, Hamburg, Oct. 13, 1829: "Glaub aber nicht, daß ich keine wichtigeren Dinge im Kopf habe als diese Bagatelle und Ähnliches. Der 3te Band der *Reisebilder* gehört zu diesen letzteren."

49. Hirt I, 555. To Immermann, Hamburg, Nov. 17, 1829.

51. Hirt I, 577. To Varnhagen, Feb. 4, 1830.

52. Hirt I, 565-566. Hamburg, Dec. 30, 1829.

53. Hirt I, 545-546, May 30, 1829.

54. Hirt I, 567, Jan 3, 1830.

55. Hirt I, 626. To Heßlossohn, Hamburg, Nov. 16, 1830.

56. Elster III, 375. "Vorrede" to *Stadt Lucca*. Heine writes: "Die Stadt Lucca" die sich unmittelbar den 'Bädern von Lucca' anschließt und auch gleichzeitig geschrieben worden, gebe ich hier keineswegs als ein Einzelbild, sondern als den Abschluß einer Lebensperiode, der zugleich mit dem Abschluß einer Weltperiode zusammentrifft."

57. Hirt I, 627-628. Hamburg, Nov. 19, 1830. Two of the seventeen chapters of the *Stadt Lucca* appeared in the *Morgenblatt*, November 1829, and were presumably written at the same time as the *Bäder von Lucca*. The balance, more than nine-tenths of the whole, took form in the following year.

58. Hirt I, 627. To Varnhagen, Hamburg, Nov. 19, 1830: "Nichts desto weniger, gestört von allen Seiten, unternehme ich es, ein zeitbeförderndes Büchlein . . . auf die Beine zu bringen."

59. *Ibid.*

60. Cf. Santkin, Paul, *Ludwig Börnes Einfluß auf Heinrich Heine*, Betzdorf, 1913.

61. Kosch, Wilhelm; *Menschen u. Bücher*, p. 221, Leipzig 1912. "Man pflegt," writes Kosch, "Heine als Vater des Feuilletons zu bezeichnen, ohne auf Jean Paul Rücksicht zu nehmen, der vor Heine den journalistischen Stil eigentlich schon begündet hat. Aber seine starke Prosa hat viel unmittelbarer, viel bewußter auf Zeitgenossen and Nachwelt gewirkt."

62. Elster III, 374. "Vorwort."

63. *Ibid.*

64. Hirt I, 635.

65. Hirt I, 639. To W. Häring, Hamburg, Jan 17, 1831: "Mein jüngstes Buch macht hier viel Glück und überall Lärm-vielleicht singe ich bald: Timpe, Timpe, mach dich auf die Strümpfe."

66. Hirt I, 628, Hamburg, Nov. 19, 1830.

67. Hirt I, 615, June 16, 1830.

68. Cf. Elster III, 506 ff. and also 579. The "Vorrede" was published by Strodtmann in the *Letzte Gedichte u. Gedanken* von H. H. (1869), from Heine's *Nachlaß* in German. Whether it ever existed in French is uncertain.

69. Elster III, 507, *Préface*: "Ce livre est un théâtre d'exhibition. Entrez, n'ayez nulle crainte. Je ne suis pas si méchant que j'en ai

l'air. Je n'ai peint mon visage de si farouches couleurs que pour mieux effrayer mes ennemis dans la bataille. Au fond je suis doux comme un agneau. Rassurez-vous donc, et donnez-moi la main. Mes armes aussi, vous pouvez les toucher, même le carquois et les flèches, car j'en ai émoussé la pointe ainsi que nous avons coutume de le faire, nous autres sauvages, quand nous approchons d'un lieu consacré. Entre nous dit, ces flèches n'étaient pas seulement acérées, mais bien empoisonnées aussi. Aujourd'hui elles sont tout à fait bénignes et inoffensives, et vous pouvez vous amuser à en regarder les plumes diaprées; vos enfants pourraient même s'en servir en guise de jouet."

70. *Ibid.* "Le style, l'enchaînement des pensées, les transitions, les brusques saillies, les étrangetés d'expression, bref, tout le caractère de l'original allemand a été, autant que possible, reproduit mot à mot dans cette traduction française des *Reisebilder*. Le goût, l'élégance, l'agrément, la grâce, ont été impitoyablement sacrifiés partout à la fidélité littérale. C'est maintenant un livre allemand en langue française, lequel livre n'a pas la prétention de plaire au public français, mais bien de faire connaître à ce public une originalité étrangère. Enfin, je veux instruire, sinon amuser."

71. *Ibid.*, 507-508.

72. Elster, III, 579. Vorrede zur französischen Ausgabe der *Reisebilder*.

73. *Ibid.*

74. Hirt I, 641-642.

75. Elster VII, 292-293. "Einleitung": "Ich weiß ein Königskind, das in einer schlechten adligen Reitschule schon im voraus die größten Sprünge zu wagen lernt. Für solche KönigsKinder muß man doppelt hohe Schranken errichten, und man muß ihnen die goldnen Sporen umwickeln, und es muß ihnen ein zahmeres Roß und eine bürgerlich bescheidnere Genossenschaft zugeteilt werden."

76. Hirt I, 641-642. To Varnhagen, April 1, 1831.

77. *Ibid.*

78. Hirt II, 5. To Moltke, Paris, July 25, 1831.

79. Elster V, 152. *Französische Zustände*. Zwischennote zu Artikel IX.

80. *Ibid.* •

81. Elster III, 394, Chap. V. *Die Stadt Lucca*.

## CHAPTER I I

### DRAMATIC AND EPIC INTERMEZZI

#### I. *Alamansor* and *Ratcliff*

POETS AND PARENTS ARE ALIKE in that they are often partial to their less promising offspring. It is certainly true—there are sufficient cases in all the branches of art to prove it—that the artist defends with more than warranted zeal creations that have been coldly received, or even rejected by the public.

Heine's contribution to the list of literary failures includes the two tragedies *Alamansor* and *Ratcliff*. The *Rabbi von Bacharach*, fine as many of its pages are, represents Heine's sole attempt to write a novel, a genre of writing for which his talent was not especially adapted. As it remains a fragment, the remainder having been destroyed by fire, it would be unfair to call it a failure, were it not for the fact that Heine himself practically designated it as one,<sup>1</sup> after having labored for years to complete the story.

The two works to which this chapter is devoted do not ordinarily receive much critical attention. They are, after all, like paste diamonds scattered among genuine stones. If they are here given more space than accords with their literary merit, it is only because the nature of this study calls for an analysis of the author's own personal opinion of his writings, regardless of the rating accorded them by literary critics. Indeed, Heine's remarks on his dramas and the *Rabbi* form an important contribution to his self-critical material.

The tragedy *Alamansor* was written in Heine's university period, during 1820 and 1821. The first two acts he wrote in deep solitude in the little village of Beul, near Bonn, while the last act was finished after his first matriculation at the university of Göttingen. The author acknowledged his indebtedness for the central idea to the poet Fouqué in a letter of June 1823,

two months after publication of the tragedy. "I recall that the charming romance of Donna Clara and Don Gasairos in the *Zauberring*, of which I thought a great deal in the most significant situations of my life, and which I, at times, imagine having written myself, hovered often before my mind when I wrote *Alamansor*."<sup>2</sup> However, too much credit should not be given to Fouqué, whose treatment of the racial problem and of the story diverges radically from Heine's. While the suggestion for the drama may have come from him, it is not necessary to go beyond the poet's own personal experience for the *raison d'être* of the *Alamansor*. It was his unforgettable love for Amalia Heine and the persecution of his race that he crystallized in this long-winded, wooden drama. In short, it provided a sort of conducting rod for the lightning of his anguish and pain. "Into this book I have thrown my own self, together with my paradoxes, my wisdom, my love, my hate, and all my madness," he wrote Steinmann while the work was still in the making.<sup>3</sup>

It is curious with what detail and pedantry the young poet discusses this relatively insignificant work, in contrast to his often exasperating reticence on the subject of much of his famous verse and prose. It is an immature self-criticism that we find in contemporary letters devoted to *Alamansor*. He is fully conscious of its dependence upon models and this dependence is responsible for his exhausting verbosity on the subject. "I have confined myself rigidly to the code ("Comment") of Aristotle," he continues in the letter to Steinmann, "and have conscientiously adopted his regulation measurements with respect to place, time and action ("seine Mensur in Hinsicht des Orts, der Zeit und der Handlung"— a clever punning on the etiquette of duelling), "I have further endeavored to infuse a little poetry into my tragedy."<sup>4</sup>

In February 1821 he had finished all but half an act. He was annoyed to discover that by this time his own regard for his idol was not very high; not only was it a poor tragedy, but it did not even deserve the name of one.<sup>5</sup>

Yes, there are charmingly beautiful passages and scenes in it; originality shines forth everywhere; everywhere surprisingly poetic pictures and thoughts sparkle so that the ensemble glitters and radiates behind a magic veil of diamonds. Thus speaks the vain author, the enthusiast for poetry. But the stern critic, the inexorable dramatist wears glasses of an entirely different cut, shakes his head and declares the whole business—a pretty marionette. ‘A tragedy must be drastic,’ he murmurs, and that is the death sentence on mine. Have I no dramatic talent? It is quite possible. Or have the French tragedies which I used to admire so much exerted unconsciously their old influence? The latter is more probable. Just fancy, in my tragedy all three unities are observed most conscientiously, hardly more than four persons are allowed to speak, and the dialogue is almost as refined, polished and well rounded-off as in *Phèdre* or in *Zaire*. And you wonder? The riddle is easily solved: I have attempted also to unite in the drama romantic spirit with plastic form.<sup>6</sup>

It will be necessary once more to refer to the essay *Romanticism* for the key to this letter, for there he set out to establish a harmony between plastic classicism and romanticism. Now an opportunity presented itself to apply these theories to the tragedy. Its form, like that of Lessing’s drama, was to be a vindication of theory, and the student of German literature knows how little sheer poetic beauty Lessing succeeded in putting into *Minna von Barnhelm* or *Emilia Galotti*, however admirable they may be in other respects. On the other hand, the content of *Alamansor* was autobiographic and intensely personal. The disparity in form and content inevitably prevented that harmonious interpenetration so necessary to all the elements of the drama. The formal, conventionalized style of the tragedy would simply not adapt itself under the hand of a highly subjective lyrical artist to the expression of personal emotions.

Several years later, when calling the attention of Immermann to certain defects in the latter’s dramas, Heine cited the tendency of his own verse toward broadness and over-wordiness. “Not yet has a young poet escaped this danger in his first

works. The same reproach applies to my<sup>f</sup> *Alamansor*, only that this is not the only one: it is entirely avoided in *Ratcliff*, perhaps a little too much. The accursed word-imagery in which I had to have *Alamansor* and his oriental consorts speak, led me to expansion."<sup>7</sup>

George Brandes has an excellent metaphor to explain the skillful art of condensation in Heine's poetry: whereas in earlier times a church clock was the simplest, mechanical invention for the precise telling of time, until it became simplified to a pocket watch which performed the same duties with lesser complications, so the poetry, let us say, of the church-clock epoch was diffusive and expansive, while in modern times, as cultivated by a poet like Heine, the poetic subject finds its supreme expression, in both conception and style, in a poem of only a few strophes.<sup>8</sup> This studied abbreviation and restraint is, perhaps, one of the more prominent features of Heine's poetry as a whole, as is finely illustrated in a poem like No. 33 of the *Lyrisches Intermezzo* ("Ein Fichtenbaum steht einsam").<sup>9</sup> On the other hand in the drama and the novel, where an entirely different mode of expression is called for, these qualities, so indispensable to the pure lyric, must undergo a certain adjustment. Heine admitted, then, that in the one case, *Alamansor*, he did not condense his material enough. In the other, *Ratcliff*, as we have just noted, he insisted that he condensed it too much.<sup>10</sup>

Another weakness that he detected in the *Alamansor* was its *Tendenz*. He protested, to be sure, that such an interpretation of his motives filled him with rage and disgust.<sup>11</sup> However, in January 1821, when he offered the manuscript of the *Lyrisches Intermezzo* together with the plays to Dümmler, he distinctly underscored this feature of *Alamansor*, the "material of which is religious and polemic."<sup>12</sup> Likewise, his consciousness of these elements in the work is perfectly plain in the fear expressed that the pious would find much in it to criticize.<sup>13</sup> It is difficult to explain these contradictory expressions except through the sen-



sitiveness and helplessness of a young poet at the mercy of cold-blooded critics. In the one case, he may have been resentful that the critics sought out only the polemic issue for the full force of their attack, neglecting the other features. On the other hand, the letters to his publisher merely exhibited the technique of salesmanship by stressing the points that would make the book sell.

The tragedy *Ratcliff* was written during three days of January 1822. Three decades later he recalls from his "Matratzen-gruft," with wistful irony, that those were days

when the sunlight shone down with a peculiar, mild benevolence upon the snow covered roofs and the sadly stripped trees. I wrote it at one stretch and without revision. While writing, it seemed to me as though I heard above my head a rustling as of the wingbeat of a bird. When I told my friends, the young Berlin poets, about it, they looked at one another strangely, and assured me with one voice that they had never experienced the like in writing.<sup>14</sup>

This is his confession in the autumn of 1851 in the Preface to the third edition of the *Neue Gedichte*. It is remarkable for the undiminished enthusiasm for a youthful creative achievement, which, by that time, had not stood the test of literary excellence, in spite of the ironical effort, with the characteristic Heine pose and egotism, to establish a mystic thread of relationship between his genius and the supernatural. When the work was fresh from his hand, there was no question in his mind of its power and originality and its eternal value for posterity. To those who review the young author's attitude toward this work, the dedicatory verses written in a presentation copy for Christiani contain no suggestion of irony.:

Mit starken Händen schob ich von den Pforten  
Des dunkeln Geisterreichs die rost'gen Eisenriegel;  
Vom roten Buch der Liebe riß ich dorten  
Die urgeheimnisvollen sieben Siegel;  
Und was ich schaute in den ew'gen Worten,  
Das bring' ich dir in dieses Liedes Spiegel.

Ich und mein Name werden untergehen,  
Doch dieses Lied muss ewiglich bestehen.<sup>15</sup>

Like *Alamansor*, this play, too, was to be a *Hauptkonfession* and to go beyond the other tragedy in that it removed "from the red book of love the primitive-mysterious seven seals."<sup>16</sup>

The plays were published in 1823 and on August 20. *Alamansor* received its first and last presentation. As a stage piece it was a complete failure.<sup>17</sup> When the opinion that the plays were Heine's weakest productions had ripened to certainty in the minds of critics, Heine took up the cudgels in their defense. Whatever he had found in them to criticize before, he now subordinated to what he regarded as their preëminent merits. He was convinced by 1823 that *Alamansor* had great value, chiefly because of its essential truthfulness; if not, he was willing to call his whole life a lie.<sup>18</sup> With more reserve he wrote Fouqué: "I do not know why, but this lucid, mild poem (*Alamansor*) is, in my opinion, extremely uncanny, while I think with contentment of the sombre, stony *Ratcliff*."<sup>19</sup> This odd inconsistency can probably be attributed to psychological causes. One of the two underlying experiences in the dramas, the one that offered the greatest emotional release from an intolerable daily anguish finds expression especially in *Ratcliff*, the poetic consummation of his love for Amalie Heine. Although in actual life his passion was frustrated, in death Ratcliff and Maria (Heine and Amalie) achieved the union that was denied the living. This alone was a decisive victory for the creative personality. *Alamansor*, the initial experience of which was racial, not individual, more objectively treated than its companion-piece, could not furnish this needed catharsis of surcharged emotions.

Whatever the reasons, the evidence is cumulative that the young author felt that the tragedies vibrated with experiences that were valid for all time. In a more serious tone than usual he wrote from Berlin, May 4, 1823, to his brother-in-law, Moritz Embden, revealing his affection for the plays:

You will read in this book how human beings and families perish, and how, nevertheless, this destruction is conditioned by a higher conception, and is intended by Providence for more serene purposes. The real poet does not give the history of his own period, but of all times, and therefore a genuine poem is also always a mirror of any present time.<sup>20</sup>

After the stage debacle of *Alamansor* he spoke less often of it. But *Ratcliff* he defended stubbornly. "Make careful inquiries concerning *Ratcliff*," he urges Moser in the following autumn, "it has truly not found sufficient recognition. If I were not too ill-humored and vexed, I would write something stimulating about it."<sup>21</sup> As late as 1830 we find him explaining to the artist J. P. Lyser in considerable detail the degree of definiteness and lifelikeness which he had hoped the artist would be able to convey in his illustrations to *Ratcliff* and which he found to be lacking in certain of these. The nebulous figures should bear a resemblance to Maria and Ratcliff, without giving, however, the full illusion of reality," strange, independent shadows which do not directly clash with life and fuse themselves with it where ever possible."<sup>22</sup>

*Ratcliff* embodies a certain concession to a strong literary tradition of the times, for its basic idea was to be "a substitute for the customary *fatum*."<sup>23</sup> The frame work does indeed bear a resemblance to the conventional fate-tragedy of the nineteenth century, but apart from that, one fails to discover a deeper correspondance between the personal, absolutely real experience upon which *Ratcliff* rests, and the rather wooden mechanics of Müllner and Werner. A certain similarity to the *Ahnfrau* of Grillparzer is, however, very striking, as far as the atmosphere is concerned.

That Heine's high regard for *Ratcliff* was enduring is borne out by the preface to the third edition of the *Neue Gedichte*, already referred to. He considered it an important document of his literary life."<sup>24</sup> It gives a resumé of my poetic Storm and

Stress period, which receives very incomplete and obscure expression in the *Junge Leiden* of the *Buch der Lieder*.<sup>25</sup> Writing thus from Paris, twenty-nine years after its first appearance, he seemed to judge the work in the light of the great socialistic movements of the nineteenth century, which had recently demonstrated their importance on the Paris streets (in 1848-49). "By the fireside of honest Tom in *Ratcliff* the great porridge issue is already beginning to seethe, which a thousand spoiled cooks are now ladling, and which foams and boils over more each day."<sup>26</sup> This attitude, however, played no part in his life at the time he wrote the drama.<sup>27</sup> Such a strong hold on him had the Saint Simonistic doctrine exerted during the early years in Paris and the subsequent development of communistic theories there that even this earlier work was examined under the distorting lens of socialistic theory.

That when the tragedies appeared, Heine should have rated them above his early lyrics<sup>28</sup>—and he seems to have been sincere in this,—is certainly as astounding a piece of literary self-evaluation as Milton's reputed preference of *Paradise Regained* to *Paradise Lost*. It has, however, its reasons, as I have sought to show above. Particularly as regards *Ratcliff*, he maintained until his maturest years<sup>29</sup> the conviction that in this sombre work he had given genuine, though perhaps not altogether intelligible, expression to the profoundest emotions of his soul. If the two dramas proved in fact to be nothing but literary mis-carriages, *Ratcliff* at least has received some portion of fame through Heine's poetic references to it. One of these, written in 1823 and addressed to Merckel, reviews the turmoil of his life with its loves, its hate and its cheapness.<sup>30</sup>

Und als ich all diese Studien gemacht,  
Da hab' ich ruhig den Ratcliff geschrieben.<sup>31</sup>

As motto for *Alamansor* he selected the following verse, which to any one who has read the play with its tragic conclusion, is startling with its cool irony and almost brutal presentation of the facts:

Glabut nicht,\* es sei so ganz und gar phantastisch  
 Das hübsche Lied, das ich euch freundlich biete!  
 Hört zu: es ist halb episch und halb drastisch,  
 Dazwischen blüht manch' lyrisch zarte Blüte;  
 Romantisch ist der Stoff, die Form ist plastisch,  
 Das Ganze aber kam aus dem Gemüte;  
 Es kämpfen Christ und Moslem, Nord und Süden,  
 Die Liebe kommt am End' und macht den Frieden.<sup>32</sup>

## 2. *Der Rabbi von Bacherach*

THE *Rabbi von Bacherach* is an odd penny among Heine's works. Partly drawn to the study of medieval Hebrew civilization by his occupation with *Alamansor*, partly influenced by his activities in the Berlin Verein für Kultur und Wissenschaft der Juden during student days, as well as by his own personal background, Heine had, in 1824, undertaken to write a novel of love and sorrow in late medieval Jewry. Despite affectionate and persistent labor, only the fragment in the fourth volume of the *Salon* (1840) remains, after the greater portion of it had been destroyed in the Hamburg fire.

An ambitious plan accompanies his first reference to the work. A letter to Moser of June 25, 1824 recounts its beginnings:

I am studying the chronicles thoroughly and especially much *Historia Judaica*, the latter on account of its connection with the *Rabbi* and perhaps, also, from inner necessity. As I turn the pages of those sad annals, very strange feelings pervade me, an abundance of instruction and suffering. The spirit of Jewish history reveals itself to me ever more gradually, and this spiritual armor will certainly be of assistance to me later. I have only written a third of my *Rabbi*, my physical pains have interrupted me in it in a serious way, and heaven knows whether I shall finish it soon, or how well.<sup>33</sup>

By October he had not progressed much farther, but his growing interest in the theme led him to anticipate a large volume.<sup>34</sup> None of his books, he declared, had received as much love and care as the *Rabbi*,<sup>35</sup> and because love was its inspira-

tion, the book would be "an eternal lamp in God's Cathedral, no sputtering light of the theater."<sup>36</sup> Little more was done on it until the following year. In April 1825 he thought that with his law degree behind him, he would continue the *Rabbi*, which weighed heavily upon his soul. He was still confident that it was the most unselfish, the most genuine work he had ever written.<sup>37</sup>

After serious effort, broken by innumerable interruptions he was ready to incorporate the book, "somewhat trimmed,"<sup>38</sup> in the second volume of the *Reisebilder*. At this time Professor Elster considers the *Rabbi* to have been as good as finished.<sup>39</sup> However, Heine changed his mind at the last minute, and not until 1832, when he was already in Paris, does he make further mention of it. "A novel has gone bad on me, but I shall probably deliver a few novelistic pieces in a collection which I am providing this winter, and into which I shall chuck the *Rabbi*."<sup>40</sup> Soon afterwards it was for the most part burned in his house in Hamburg, and in 1840 he made terms with Campe to publish what was left as a fragment. "I hope," he wrote to this publisher and friend, "that the *Rabbi* will please you, and I feel that its theme will appeal to timely interests and sympathies; at least the book will occupy an honorable position as a noteworthy original work among my other books."<sup>41</sup> The fragment was published in the fourth *Salon* volume. The expressed wish of the author that his *Börne*, the "book of scandal, that roaring lion," which came off the press at the same time, would carry along with it the "more gentle book," the *Salon* volume, was not realized, for in the storm of agitation caused by *Börne* the public completely overlooked that "innocent lamb" in which the *Rabbi von Bacherach* was included.<sup>42</sup>

It was not at all strange that the completion of the novel was delayed from year to year. From the very beginning there were misgivings on Heine's part as to whether he were equal to the task of writing a novel. It was a period of experimentation and inner questioning, "In this connection," he writes Moser from Göttingen in the year of his first attack on the theme, "I have

noticed, too, that I lack completely narrative talent; perhaps I do myself an injustice, perhaps it merely lies in the stubbornness of my material. The Passover feast is excellent, and I am greatly indebted to you for the communications from the *Agade*.”<sup>43</sup> His original intention was to enlarge the scope of his work by furnishing the text with illustrations and with “original commentaries on the Jews and their history.”<sup>44</sup> Yet the reflection that he alone could write the book, and that the accomplishment would be an act both useful and pleasing to God strengthened him.<sup>45</sup> Every line was a struggle in which the urge to complete it was daily hampered by enormous difficulties.<sup>46</sup>

The *Rabbi* was a work of conscience as well as conscientiousness. Of no work of Heine are we so well informed as to the source materials. He mentioned these in many letters in the two years 1824-1825. For the interested student Ernst Elster has listed them conveniently in his introduction to the *Rabbi von Bacherach*.<sup>47</sup> The painstaking research which Heine’s studies involved was compensated for by the thought that the *Rabbi* would be regarded as a valuable source book by the historians, or, in his own characteristic phrase,” by the Zunzes of all the centuries.”<sup>48</sup>

What has been said of the tragedies applies equally to this unfortunate experiment. For the writer, whose talent enabled him to fill in a canvas animated with unforgettable figures and episodes, the delay in completing a narrative work which involved a too great wealth of material and gave dangerous opportunities for platform lecturing, was inevitable. It may well be doubted whether his gifts were of a sort to make him capable of a sustained narrative. A few years later in the *Bäder von Lucca* (1829) he wrote, on the strength of costly experience: “One demands two things of a poet: in his lyric poems there must be nature-notes, in his epic or dramatic poems there must be plastic figures.”<sup>49</sup>

One of the paradoxes of his life may also have arrested his

poetic powers in treating a Jewish national theme. This was his baptism and reception into the Christian church. So humiliating was this purely formal, material act that the *Rabbi*, like all his prose works, could not be entirely free from polemical intention. It was not his exclusive aim, however, to set himself up as a champion of Judaism. For that he was too much of an artist, more deeply interested in the expression than in the thing expressed.

Since the greater part of the work was destroyed by fire, the Heine scholar is faced by the necessity of employing conjecture. A very illuminating passage regarding the work in a letter to Campe in 1840 might be taken to imply a certain polemical twist. "I wrote this medieval portrait of manners (sic!) about fifteen years ago, and what I am here giving is only the exposition of the book that was burned in the home of my mother—perhaps for my good. For in the continuation, heretical views appeared, which would have evoked many outcries from Jews as well as Christians."<sup>50</sup> Much earlier, in fact, he had seen in it something more than a "medieval portrait of manners." "If I lend an ear to the voice of outer wisdom," he wrote Moser, "I wouldn't write it at all. I see in advance what advantages I sacrifice and what hostility I arouse with it."<sup>51</sup> This was in 1824, and the polemical intent is certainly not veiled. The critic is not permitted to surrender to curious, unwarranted speculation, especially when the material for the support of any definite theory is entirely lacking, as in the case of the *Rabbi von Bacherach*. If it is impossible to determine the degree of polemical intent from the fragment which remains, one can infer that such an intent was present by certain poems on the Jewish misère which date from the period of intense occupation with the novel. Such is "Edom," which had been inspired by the reading of the works of the Protestant theologian Basnages, and which Heine enclosed in a letter to Moser, Oct. 25, 1824. The bitter irony and resentment in it may well have found their way into those chapters in the *Rabbi* that have been lost.



Ein Jahrtausend schon und länger  
 Dulden wir uns brüderlich,  
 Du, du duldest, daß ich atme,  
 Daß du rasest, dulde ich.

The suppressed rage and eating sorrow that were constantly reborn out of the contemplation of the woes of his race are recorded in that "sombre martyr's song," conveyed to Moser in the same letter and containing the fervent, almost ritualistic lines:<sup>52</sup>

Brich aus in lauten Klagen,  
 Du düstres Martyrlied,  
 Das ich so lang getragen  
 Im flammenstillen Gemüt!

"Es dringt in alle Ohren,  
 Und durch die Ohren ins Herz;  
 Ich habe gewaltig beschworen  
 Den tausendjährigen Schmerz.

No one who passes in review Heine's references to the *Rabbi von Bacherach* can avoid a certain feeling of sympathy. It occupied his mind more or less actively for a decade or longer, and his struggle to master the refractory material may be glimpsed again and again in the references to it which are scattered through his correspondence. He felt that it was his mission to set up in a great historical novel a monument to the struggles and sufferings of his race. The colorful fragment that remains showed that he had the necessary equipment in "Kulturgeschichte" and other historical knowledge for the task. It confirms, however, as fully as so brief a fragment can, his own feeling that he lacked the epic power to create a work of sustained narrative interest.

### 3. Heine and the Ballet: *Faust* and *Diana*

THE *Faust* ballet was published together with the *Romanzero*. The first mention of it occurs in 1847. It was written on the order of Benjamin Lumley for the Royal Ballet in London.

Heine's interest in the Faust legend dated from 1834. His remark in Goethe's presence in Weimar that he, too, was engaged in writing a *Faust*, thus bringing to an abrupt termination the interview between the two poets, has always remained a delightful as well as a characteristic anecdote to the Heine lover.<sup>53</sup> At various other times the subject came up for mention in his works, but the final printed version had little in common with the author's earlier blueprints.

Lumley was unable to secure the censor's consent to produce the ballet in the London theater, but Heine received his 6000 francs. Various attempts to stage it in Berlin failed. Heine then appealed to the *Allgemeine Zeitung* to see if that periodical would be willing to publish it, a plan that likewise failed.

In 1851 Campe agreed to publish it with the *Romanzero*, but in September of that year Heine clearly saw that the *Faust* was not in harmony with this cycle of poems,<sup>54</sup> and in November it was printed separately. Before the sale of his manuscript was concluded, he spoke more highly of his work than it deserved. But he needed money badly and felt that a little salesmanship would do no harm to the cause of literature. To Lumley he wrote that his pamphlet should prove very interesting reading to those who were only acquainted with the Goethe text.<sup>55</sup> He prided himself on giving the public the true Faust of the folk legend.<sup>56</sup> To keep Lumley interested, no doubt, he promised a great success if the ballet were once produced. Campe was assured that the printed version would sell well, because for Germans there was always an undiminished interest in Faust literature.<sup>57</sup> "This time," Heine concluded his letter, "I am providing in a few pages not only a quantity of instruction but also a literary curiosity. . . ."<sup>58</sup> To another acquaintance he confided that the Faust book contained heretical views which would clash with those of the Goethean school, but that he had, at any rate, endeavored to view the worn-out material from a new angle.<sup>59</sup> One of the radical departures from previous treatments, one very characteristic for Heine, was the elimination

of the figure Mephistopheles in favor of a female power called Mephistophela. He had, from the very beginning, made a mystery of the title: "Der Doktor Faust, ein Tanzpoem nebst kuriosen Berichten über Teufel, Hexen und Dichtkunst," warning Lumley to keep it a secret, or, if circumstances demanded it, to give it the temporary title of "Astaroth."<sup>60</sup> "I have shown in my letter," he wrote the latter, "that this name fits the demon summoned by Faust just as well as the name Mephistopheles."<sup>61</sup> In his epistolary "Comments" addressed to Lumley he goes to unnecessary lengths, in a cheap, small way, to establish the superiority of his own treatment over that of Goethe's:

Unfortunately, I could not overstep the limits of resources at hand, but within these I have performed what a respectable man can perform, and I have at least striven for one merit, which Goethe can in no way boast of: in his Faust poem we miss throughout a faithful adherence to real legend, reverence for its true spirit, devotion to its inner soul, a devotion that the skeptic of the eighteenth century (and such was Goethe until his blessed end) could neither feel nor comprehend. . . . My ballet contains the essential elements of the old legend of Doctor Faustus, and, while weaving its outstanding developments into a dramatic unity, I abided conscientiously, even in the details, by the existing traditions, as I first of all came across them in folk-books which are sold in Germany in the market places, and in the puppet-shows which I saw performed in my childhood.<sup>62</sup>

Whatever grain of truth may lodge in his claim, these utterances are best valued, not as sincere opinions, but as mere indications of good salesmanship. A rational brain, like Heine's, would hardly call the ballet one of his greatest and most poetic productions,<sup>63</sup> unless he were trying to seduce Campe. Elster writes on this head: "In all these remarks there was, for Heine, a special reason for praising his work,"<sup>64</sup> i.e. to sell his manuscript. When it was published, material consideration yielded to a more modest and more fairly critical opinion on the part of the author. "It is a light piece of gold work, over which many a smith working in coarser metals will shake his head," he ex-

plained in the "Nachwort" to the *Romanzero*.<sup>65</sup> In this, as in other cases, Heine showed himself an objective critic when there was no ulterior motive to be served. But one must always reckon with the tendency to pose. "I hope," he wrote Georg Weerth in 1851, "that my *Romanzero*, and especially my *Faust*, will please you. God knows that I place little value on these books, and they would not have seen the light of day so soon, if Campe had not pressed me hard."<sup>66</sup> The *Romanzero* does not deserve the slur; the *Faust* certainly does.

*Die Göttin Diana*, another ballet, originated in the same way as the *Faust* ballet. It was never worked out in full detail because the prospects of its ever being produced were exceedingly small. His purpose in publishing it at all was to prevent plagiarism, or as he more fittingly described it, "to hinder crows who are continually on my scent from decorating themselves all too proudly with the peacock feathers of others,"<sup>67</sup> a blow aimed at Richard Wagner for his borrowing of Tannhäuser material from the third *Salon* volume, as Elster holds.<sup>68</sup>

## NOTES

### CHAPTER III

1. Cf. letter to Friedr. Merckel, Aug. 24, 1832: "Ein Roman ist mir mißglückt; doch werde ich wohl in einer Sammlung, welche ich diesen Winter besorge, und worin ich auch den Rabbi hineinschmeiße, einige Romanstücke geben." Hirt, II, 25.

2. Hirt, I, 223.

3. Hirt, I, 156. Oct. 29, 1820.

4. *Ibid.* "Ich habe mich ganz an den Comment des Aristoteles gehalten und habe seine Mensur in Hinsicht des Orts, der Zeit und der Handlung angenommen."

5. Hirt, I, 166. To Friedrich Steinmann, Feb. 4, 1821: "Und zu meinem Entsetzen finde ich, daß dieses von mir selbst angestaunte und vergötterte Prachtwerk nicht allein keine gute Tragödie ist, sondern gar nicht mal den Namen einer Tragödie verdient."

6. *Ibid.*

7. Hirt, I, 211. April 10, 1823.

8. Brandes, Georg, *Heinrich Heine*, p. 74.

9. Elster, I, 78. *Lyrisches Intermezzo*.

10. Hirt, I, 211, letter to Immermann, Berlin, April 10, 1823: "Noch ist kein junger Dichter dieser Klippe (ie.. the tendency to expansion) "entgangen bei seinen Erstlingen. Meinen "Almanson" trifft derselbe Vorwurf, nur daß solcher leider nicht der einzige ist; im "Ratcliff" ist er ganz vermieden, vielleicht etwas zu sehr."

11. Hirt, L., 209. To Immermann, of same date: "... und wie ich höre, will man dem "Almanson" eine Tendenz unterschreiben und diese auf eine Weise ins Gerücht bringen, die mein ganzes Wesen empört und mit souveränem Ekel erfüllt."

12. Hirt, I, 191, letter to Dümmler, Jan 5, 1823.

13. Cf. letter to Immermann, Notes 10 and 11.

14. Elster II, *Lesarten*, Vorrede zur dritten Auflage, p. 522.

15. Elster II, *Nachlese*, No. 23, p. 66. *Vermischte Gedichte*.

16. Cf. letter to Dümmler (Hirt I, 191), Berlin, Jan 5, 1823: "Eine kleine Tragödie... deren Grundidee ein Surrogat für das gewöhnliche Fatum sein soll."

17. It failed, not so much because of its very obvious shortcomings, but because of a mere accident. The court poet Edward Schültz, who had played the rôle of Almansor in Brunswick in 1823, attributed its bad reception to a confusion of names, the author of the play being take for a certain "Jew Heine," an unpopular pawnbroker of Brunswick. The name alone was responsible for the jeers and hisses of the audience, although Heine, in characteristic keeping with his persecution mania, conjured up invisible enemies to assume the blame. Cf. Elster II, 247 ff.

18. Hirt, I, 209. To Immermann.

19. Hirt, I, 223. June 10, 1823.

20. Hirt, I, 215.

21. Hirt, I, 272. Lüneburg, Nov. 28, 1823.

22. Hirt, I, 570. Letter to Lyser, Hamburg, Jan. 6, 1830.

23. Cf. Note 16.

24. Elster II, 522. "Vorrede zur dritten Auflage," Paris, Nov. 24, 1851.

25. *Ibid.*

26. *Ibid.* "Am herde des ehrlichen Tom im Ratcliff brodeln schon die große Suppenfrage, worin jetzt tausend verdorbene Köche herumlöffeln, und die täglich schäumender überkocht."

27. Elster II, 245. "Einleitung": "Dagegen," writes Elster, "hat Heine zu jener Zeit noch keineswegs auf die Berührung der sozialen Frage im *Ratcliff* hingewiesen, wovon er 1851 in der Vorrede zur dritten Auflage der 'Neuen Gedichte' ausführlich handelt. In der Tat sind diese Züge nur angedeutet, und sie besaßen in der Seele des jungen Dichters noch nicht jenen Wert, den sie nach dem Aufkommen der sozialistischen Lehren zu haben scheinen."

28. Hirt I, 207. To Steinmann, April 10, 1823: "Meine 'Tragödien' haben eben die Presse verlassen. Ich weiß, man wird sie sehr herunterreißen. Aber ich will Dir im Vertrauen gestehen: sie sind sehr gut, besser als meine Gedichtesammlung, die keinen Schuß Pulver wert ist."

29. Cf. the Preface of 1851, referred to.

30. Elster II, "Nachlese," No. 24, 67.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 66.

32. Cf. the dedicatory verse to *Alamansor*, Elster II, 250.

2. *Der Rabbi von Bacherach*

33. Hirt, I, 321.
34. Hirt I, 332. To Moser, Göttingen, Oct. 25, 1824: "Er wird aber sehr groß, wohl ein dicker Band, und mit unsäglichlicher Liebe trage ich das ganze Werk in der Brust."
35. *Ibid.*
36. *Ibid.*, p. 333: "Aber eben auch, weil es aus der Liebe hervorgeht, wird es ein unsterbliches Buch werden, eine ewige Lampe im Dome Gottes, kein verprasselndes Theaterlicht."
37. *Ibid.*, 332: "Es ist doch aus der Liebe hervorgehend, nicht aus eitel Ruhmgier."
38. Hirt I, 415. Letter to Zunz, Hamburg, May 1826: "Im zweiten Teil der *Reisebilder* erscheint der *Rabbi*, und zwar sehr beschnitten."
39. Elster (IV, 444) writes: "Als aber der zweite Band der *Reisebilder* zu Ostern herauskam, hatte sich Heine doch eines andern besonnen und hielt das Werk, das vermutlich so gut wie abgeschlossen war, zurück."
40. Hirt II, 25. To Merckel, Dieppe, Aug. 24, 1832.
41. Hirt II, 330. To Campe, Paris, July 24, 1840.
42. Hirt, II, pp. 327-328. To Campe, Paris, 17 or 18 of July, 1840.
43. Hirt I, 321. To Moser, Göttingen, June 25, 1824.
44. *Ibid.*
45. Hirt I, 365. To Moser, Göttingen, July 1, 1825: ". — doch drängts mich unverdrossen vorwärts, indem ich das Bewußtseyn in mir trage, daß nur ich dieses Buch schreiben kann, und daß das Schreiben desselben eine nützliche, gottgefällige Handlung ist."
46. *Ibid.* Der Rabbi "schreitet nur langsam vorwärts, jede Zeile wird abgekämpft."
47. Elster IV, pp. 441-442.
48. Hirt, I, 366. To Moser, Göttingen, July 1, 1825: "Es wird ein Buch sein, das von den Zunzen aller Jahrhunderte als Quelle genannt werden wird." Leopold Zunz (1794-1886), a well-known Jewish scholar and director of the Jewish Teacher's Seminary in Berlin, wrote many works on Jewish religion and history, and established, through his *Zeitschrift für Wissenschaft des Judentums* (1822-24), modern Jewish scholarship. He, together with Ganz and Moser, was associated with Heine in the common interests of

the Verein für Kultur und Wissenschaft der Juden. He seems to have been an indefatigable worker and a prolific writer.

49. Elster III, 356. "Von einem Dichter verlangt man zwei Dinge: in seinen lyrischen Gedichten müssen Naturlaute, in seinen epischen oder dramatischen Gedichten müssen Gestalten sein."

50. Hirt II, 329.

51. Hirt I, 333. To Moser, Göttingen, Oct. 25, 1824.

52. Elster II, 164-5. "Nachlese" Nos. 5 and 6. Both poems were inclosed in a letter to Moser of the 25th of Oct. 1824.

### 3. Heine and the Ballet: *Faust* and *Diana*.

53. Maximilian Heine records this interview (*Erinnerungen an H. Heine*, p. 123) as well as Houben in the *Gespräche*, p. 91.

54. Elster I, 483. "Nachwort zum, Romanzero." "Ich hegte ursprünglich die Absicht, dieses Produkt dem *Romanzero* einzuverleiben, was ich aber unterließ, um nicht die Einheit der Stimmung, die in letzterem waltet und gleichsam sein Kolorit bildet, zu stören."

55. Hirt, III, 3-4. Feb. 27, 1847.

56. *Ibid.* Cf. also Note 60.

57. Hirt III, 216. To Campe, Paris, Oct. 27, 1851: "Die Maße der Faustliteratur zeigt, daß die Deutschen noch immer für diesen Stoff empänglich sind."

58. *Ibid.*

59. Hirt III, 230-231. To Oscar Peschel, Paris, Nov. 22, 1851.

60. Hirt III, 4. Paris, Feb. 27, 1847: "Halten Sie den Namen meines Ballets bis zum letzten Augenblick geheim, und nennen Sie es nötingenfalls *Astaroth*. Ich habe in meinem Briefe bewiesen, daß dieser Name, ebensogut wie Mephistopheles, dem von Faust angerufenen Dämon gebühre."

61. *Ibid.*

62. Elster 6, 496. "Erläuterungen."

63. Hirt III, 19. To Campe, Montmorency, June 20, 1847. Heine mentions his new work to Campe in the following glowing language; "... ein Gedicht, welches vom Ballet nur die Form hat, sonst aber eine meiner größten und hochpoetischsten Produktionen ist."



64. Elster writes (VI, 472): "Bei allen diesen Äußerungen lag aber für Heine besonderer Grund vor, sein Werk zu loben."
65. Elster I, 583. "Nachwort z. Romanzero."
66. Hirt, III, 222.
67. Elster VI, 101. "Vorbemerkung."
68. Elster VI, 102. "Heine denkt," writes E., "wohl besonders an Richard Wagners Entlehnung des Tannhäuserstoffes aus diesem Werke." The work referred to was *Salon III*, in which the Diana legend was first sketched. Cf. Elster IV, 425.

CHAPTER IV  
PARISIAN PERIOD

POETRY

UPON HIS ARRIVAL IN PARIS Heine flung himself into the whirl of a swiftly-moving cosmopolitan civilization. The wide sensuous appeal of a city that contrasted so extremely with heavy, dull Hamburg sapped all his energies, so that a definite literary program was for the time shoved into the background. He described himself as being all phosphorus.<sup>1</sup> The detachment from daily turmoil, so necessary for creative work, was lacking. It is noteworthy that the poet's uncanny intuition had presented this possibility of a loss of creative power to him before he ever set foot on French soil. He had confessed to Varnhagen early in 1831 that, if the repeated attempts to establish himself in some secure position in the fatherland should fail, he would be obliged to make Paris his residence, where his contacts with German literary life would become severed, and where all his artistic and literary ability would be wasted.<sup>2</sup> A few months later he informed the same friend from Paris that these fears were justified: "Ah! six months ago I foresaw everything and would gladly have retired into the realms of poetry and left others the butcher's trade—but it wouldn't do, *la force des choses*, we are being driven to extremities."<sup>3</sup>

His friends and readers thought that his poetic vein had run dry, but they were only partly right. A great many of the lyrical poems in the group which he afterwards collected in the *Neue Gedichte* under the caption *Verschiedene*<sup>4</sup> as well as a number from the Nachlass<sup>5</sup> were written during these early Paris days; and a decade later, when he had found solid ground under his feet he enriched the literature of his country with the highly original satirical epics, *Atta Troll* and *Das Wintermärchen*.

It was for Heine a time of preoccupation with the political, economic and social aspects of the *Juste-Milieu* of Louis Philippe and his ministers. In the middle of the year 1832 he spoke of his forthcoming book *Französische Zustände*, with the confession that in poetry and belletristic writing generally he had accomplished little. "In writing of a belletristic nature I have had little luck of late. The whirlpool in which I was swimming was too large for me to work with the freedom which poetry demands. . . . I have written few poems. . . ." <sup>6</sup> Thus he wrote to Friedrich Merckel from Dieppe, Aug. 24, 1832. To a new edition of *Neuer Frühling* which accompanied the second edition of *Reisebilder* II (1831) he was obliged to add several new poems, but only in order to give the work greater volume. <sup>7</sup> He considered that he had been more than usually industrious, for the very reason that he needed six times as much money in Paris as in Germany. <sup>8</sup> While his production of shorter lyrics continued, some of them, as has been surmised, inspired by beauties of the boulevards, the author evidently felt no satisfaction in his poetic work. In 1835 he enclosed three "poetic trifles" in a letter to Laube. <sup>9</sup> Later, in making a small contribution of four poems to Laube's *Elegante Welt*, he expressed no high opinion of them: "At this moment I am entirely without a scrap of manuscript and can only offer the enclosed four poems for your almanach. Unfortunately they do not belong to my more favored creations. Please judge them with unbiased calm, and if you likewise are of my opinion that they are excellent, do not have them printed for anything in the world." <sup>10</sup> A few months later two more poems followed, and the fact that in one of them which begins, *Ich bin nun dreißig Jahre alt, und du bist fünfzehnjährig kaum*, he was experimenting with dates, points to a lack of the spontaneity and inspiration that made popular his *Buch der Lieder*. <sup>11</sup>

The period of quasi-sterility in the lyric field continued, despite a few brilliant "Romanzen" and cleverly satirical "Zeitgedichte." "For your kindness," he wrote Weidmann in Leipzig in 1836, "I thank you most heartily; the German poet in me is

delighted by your gracious intentions, and I can promise pretty German poems for a later number. This time my portfolio registers ebb-tide, shallowest ebb-tide, and what lies in my thoughts will hardly find expression in metrical form."<sup>12</sup>

In 1838 Heine planned a supplement to the *Buch der Lieder*, which was to contain, besides the *Neuer Frühling* and the poems of the first *Salon* volume, thirty new poems, *Tannhäuser*, *Ratcliff* and a *Vorwort*. The significant feature was the new collection *An Verschiedene*. The origin of several of this group of poems lay as far back as 1830, while the poet was still in Germany, and the rest were composed between that date and 1835. A glance at Elster's chronological survey of the time of origin of these poems impresses one with the fact that Heine's poetic muse had not been idle during that period, in spite of the scant and deprecatory references to his poetry in his letters and conversations.<sup>13</sup>

The Paris lyrics included many that gave offence in Germany. To the representations of Gutzkow that Heine's enemies were only waiting for a chance to injure him, and that the inevitable charge of immorality against many of the poems of this collection was playing directly into their hands, Heine replied that he would defer publication. His reply to Gutzkow contained a justification of his art which amounted to a credo:

For the rest, I believe that in a later production I shall not have to suppress a single one of these poems, and I shall publish them with a good conscience, just as I would publish the *Satirikon* of Petronius and the *Roman Elegies* of Goethe, if I had written these masterpieces. Like the latter, my maligned poems are not food for the rough rabble. In this connection you are on a false scent. Only aristocratic spirits, to whom the artistic treatment of an offensive or an all too natural theme provides a spiritual pleasure can derive enjoyment from those poems. Only a few Germans can pronounce judgment on these poems, since the subject itself, the abnormal amours in a world mad-house such as Paris is, is unfamiliar to them. Not the moral requirements of any married bourgeois in a corner of Germany, but the autonomy of art is here important.

My motto remains: art is the purpose of art, as love is the purpose of love, and even as life itself is the purpose of life.<sup>14</sup>

The desire to avoid any polemical strife with Gutzkow and consorts as well as concern for his own reputation in Germany made Heine accept Gutzkow's advice and withhold final publication until the appearance of the *Neue Gedichte* in 1844. Perhaps he would not have been so willing to make this concession if, in his own words, he had not been more attracted by the great interests of the European scene than by the success of his books.<sup>15</sup> The time of poetic rebirth had not yet arrived. He complained to Gustav Kühne in 1839 that he no longer had great confidence in his ability to write poetry, and that the reason for this feeling lay in his advancing years, or in the temper of the age, which demanded prose rather than poetry.<sup>16</sup> At any rate, the latter reason was especially brought to the attention of the public in the amusing "Vorrede" to the third edition of the *Buch der Lieder* (1839), which begins with a poem and which closes with the surprising intimation that he could have said all that in good prose just as well. "O Phoebus Apollo! if these verses are bad, you will gladly pardon me. . . . For you are an all-knowing God, and know very well why, for so many years, I was unable to occupy myself by preference with the harmony and consonance of words. . . . You know why the flame which once delighted the world with its brilliant fireworks has suddenly to be utilized for more serious fires. . . . You know why it now consumes my heart with its silent ardor."<sup>17</sup>

We must jump over to the year 1842, when the poet sang a different tune. "I am convinced," he wrote Campe early in that year, "that I can now bring forth my most important lyric productions."<sup>18</sup> He was preparing another book of poems that were to equal those of the *Buch der Lieder*. For that purpose he was constantly sifting and revising the poems already written; a great many weak ones, he declares, were thrown away. In October of this year he communicated with Cotta about the publication of *Atta Troll*. He described it as "a short, humorous

epic, which, because of its form (it consists of very short pieces, like the *Cid*), and also because of its content (it is the intentional opposite of all *Tendenzpoesie*), would be well adapted for publication in the *Morgenblatte*."<sup>19</sup> The project fell through, and Heine turned to his old friend Laube in an effort to interest him in the epic for the *Elegante Welt*. In several letters to Laube a flash of his old enthusiasm and a satisfaction arising from confidence in the excellence of the poem stimulated him to review his work with more detail than usual. "In confidence," one of these letters, dated Nov. 7, 1842, reads, "it is the most important work that I have written in verse: abundant allusions to the times, bald humor, although restrained enough for the *Morgenblatt*; and it certainly will be an event for the public. . . . The hero of my little epic is a bear, the only one of the contemporary heroes whom I considered worthy to be sung. A mad summer night's dream!"<sup>20</sup> He had calculated with care the advantages of publishing a book at this time, as he was anxious to hush up the past (no doubt he was thinking of *Börne*) by creating a new howl.<sup>21</sup> Due in part to Heine's own attitude, unfriendly critics, like Bartels, are inclined to see in *Atta Troll* a mere *Gelegenheitsdichtung*, an attempt of the author to straighten himself out with the public. Anyone who has studied closely Heine's personality knows that his best works were published with the public's reception of them always in view, and will hesitate long before concluding from this sensitiveness to public opinion a diminished literary value. Laube had urged Heine, as I shall point out below, to strike out the personal polemics in *Börne*, advice which the author did not accept. By showing himself now ready to bear in mind what he owed his reading public as well as himself, Heine may have simply been trying to mollify Laube by confessing that his friend had been right. It will be observed, at least, that when his personal interests were seriously imperilled, Heine was always prepared to journey to Canossa.

Heine's admirers, especially those who were adherents of

realism in literature, were certainly shocked by his apostasy to the camp of romanticism in *Atta Troll*. They did not understand the original *Tendenz* in it; there were many conflicting theories concerning it. His mother, for example, was alarmed by what seemed to her a caricature of certain Jewish emancipatory ideas which it contained. Heine countered by saying that he only intended to satirize human liberalistic tendencies in the broadest sense.<sup>22</sup>

Thoughtful persons soon came to the conclusion that *Atta Troll* was a satire on the trend of modern literature as represented by Geibel and Freiligrath, and, therefore, not the work of a realist turn-coat. Heine made it quite clear that while the literati were doing their best to club Romanticism to death, in the latter half of the poem he was trying to revive it, "not in the soft modulations of the earlier school but in the boldest manner of modern humor which can and shall admit all the elements of the past."<sup>23</sup> This was, of course, to be a romanticism made to Heine's order. He was too rational and experienced not to see that the Romantic School of Novalis and Tieck was a lifeless skeleton. "But perhaps our time is not altogether hostile to the romantic element, the latter has already perished in our literature, and perhaps in the poem that I am now sending you the romantic muse bids an eternal farewell to the old Germany."<sup>24</sup>

In Chapter XVII of the poem, the dedication to Varnhagen von Ense, the poet asks his friend:

Klang das nicht wie Jugendträume,  
Die ich träumte mit Chamisso  
Und Brentano und Fouqué  
In den blauen Mondscheinnächten?<sup>25</sup>

After which, in his own poetic idiom, he lists the conventional literary devices so much in vogue among the early Romanticists.

In die Nachtigallenchöre  
Bricht herein der Bärenbrummbaß,  
Dumpf und grollend, dieser wechselt  
Wieder ab mit Geisterlispeln.

He answered his own question:

Ja, mein Freund, es sind die Klänge  
 Aus der längst verschollnen Traumzeit;  
 Nur daß oft moderne Triller  
 Gaukeln durch den alten Grundton.  
 Trotz des Übermutes wirst du  
 Hie und dort Verzagnis spüren.<sup>26</sup>

It was a move to sow literary wild oats for the last time, and the recognition and acceptance of this fact lend to the conclusion of the epic its sad, resigned charm:

Ach, es ist vielleicht das letzte  
 Freie Waldlied der Romantik!  
 In des Tages Brand-und Schlachtlärm  
 Wird es kümmerlich verhallen.  
 Andre Zeiten, andre Vögel!  
 Andre Vögel, andre Lieder!  
 Sie gefielen mir vielleicht  
 Wenn ich andre Ohren hätte!<sup>27</sup>

There are few works of Heine's that contain as much literary self-criticism as *Atta Troll*. The foreword of the first book edition of the poem in 1846, in which he outlined for the benefit of his readers its origin and scope, furnishes a striking example of Heine's self-observant mood at its best, the more so since here he judges his work with calm impartiality and without a tendency to self-justification. With sparkling humor he refers to the political *Dichtkunst*, which had invented and exploited the antithesis of talent and character, and which now placed him in the class that had talent and no character.<sup>28</sup> His assertion as to the utter lack of literary ability in a great many of the political writers of that time is certainly not exaggerated. "By the eternal gods," he declares, referring to the early 1840's when *Atta Troll* was written, "the issue in those days was the defense of the inalienable rights of the spirit, especially in poetry. Just as such a defense was the great call of my life, so least of all have I neglected it in the poem before you, and its



tone as well as its theme was a protest against the plebiscite of the tribunes of the day."<sup>29</sup> These same tribunes, in fact, were not slow to assail Heine as soon as the epic was in circulation. That he could meet his literary antagonists with confident spirit and without descending from his high plane of humor to their level of shrill abuse, was due to an unshaken faith in his own genius.

So much for the political and literary motives in the poem. "As far as its aesthetic value is concerned," he continues in the foreword of 1846, "I was quite willing to renounce all such claims (Chap. XXVII *Atta Troll*) as I still do today. I wrote it for my own pleasure and delight, in the capricious dreamy manner of that Romantic School where I spent my happiest years of youth, and where I finally beat up the school master (Schlegel)."<sup>30</sup> The only ground for criticism that he would accept as valid, he concludes, probably with a smile, would be that of impiety.<sup>31</sup> But he brands with the name of coward anyone who accuses him of aiming to destroy the liberal ideas which he had defended all his life. "No, just because those ideas hover before the poet's eyes in their most splendid clarity and greatness, the laughing fit seizes him all the more irresistibly, when he sees how rough, awkward and clumsy the interpretation of those ideas can be. He jests then, as it were, about their uncouthness of the moment. There are mirrors that are cut in such distorted fashion that even an Apollo would have to appear in them as a caricature and provoke us to laughter. In that case, however, we laugh at the caricature, not at the god."<sup>32</sup> He apologizes for the parody on Freiligrath's *Mohrenfürst*. He bears the poet no grudge, and attributes the origin of the parody to his mood at the time, when the poem made a comic impression on him.<sup>33</sup> In general, he explains and justifies the fragmentary construction of *Atta Troll* as due to its piecemeal composition for a periodical, the *Elegante Welt*.

Content and style of the poem had to meet the tame requirements of a periodical; I wrote provisionally only those chapters

which could be printed, and even they suffered many variations. I nursed the intention to publish the whole thing later in a full number, but it never went any farther than a laudable intention, and, like all great works of the Germans, such as the Cathedral of Cologne and the God of Schelling and the Prussian constitution, so it was with *Atta Troll*—it was not finished. In such an unfinished form, tolerably trimmed and only superficially rounded-off, I place it before my readers today.<sup>34</sup>

The same concern regarding the criticisms of the fragmentary form was apparent in two earlier letters to Laube, in one of which, Feb. 11, 1843, he parried the latter's charge of a lack of coherence in the poem by saying that if he had not originally wanted to publish it in an insipid periodical, the persiflage of *Zeitideen* would have been more strongly emphasized. Its fragmentary form, at any rate, was the result of these original limitations.<sup>35</sup>

In the latter part of 1843 Heine visited Hamburg for the first time after his departure for Paris. The fruits of his disappointment with this visit were immortalized in *Deutschland, Ein Wintermärchen*. It was first mentioned in a letter to Campe in February 1844:

Since I have returned, I have accomplished much, for example, an extremely humorous travel epic, my journey to Germany, a cycle of twenty poems, in rimed verse and already finished, thank God! . . . You will be satisfied with me, and the public will see me in my true form. My poems, the new ones, are an entirely new genre, versified travel pictures, and they exhale a more elevated political atmosphere than the familiar *Stänkerreime*.<sup>36</sup>

He wrote Campe, further, in April that everything but the conclusion was finished; due to physical illness he was unable to give it a final polish.<sup>37</sup> More important was his summary of its contents and of its literary significance. "It is a rimed poem which . . . describes the entire fermentation of Germany today in the most outspoken and personal manner. It is politico-romantic, and will deliver the death blow, I hope, to the prosaic-bombastic *Tendenzpoesie*."<sup>38</sup>

Two motives were distinctly responsible for the writing of the *Wintermärchen*, one of which is mentioned in the passage above quoted. After the success of *Atta Troll* Heine was tempted to write another humorous epic, in which the school of modern political thought in Germany rather than the ideas themselves should be satirized. But a casual comparison of the two poems reveals their wide disparity in conception as well as execution. This introduces the other motive for the composition: resentment at the hostile treatment he underwent at the hands of the government while he was visiting Germany, for example, the refusal of the authorities to guarantee his personal safety when he proposed a trip from Hamburg to Berlin. Although Heine did not mention these intimate secrets of a wounded vanity and egoism, the venomous onslaughts on Germany in the *Wintermärchen* nevertheless gave them away.

Comparing the Preface of the new poem for the 1844 edition with that of *Atta Troll*, the reader is astonished by the sudden fall in spiritual independence and freedom. Whereas in the latter he stood above his subject without noticeable traces of bitterness or bias, in the *Wintermärchen* he descended again to the level of his *Börne*, and employed the well-tested polemical weapons of the political tribune. "From a few naked thoughts," he wrote in the "Vorwort," "I tore off the fig leaves in hasty ill-humor, and perhaps I have injured prudishly modest ears. I am sorry, but I console myself with the consciousness that greater authors have allowed similar offenses to be charged to their score."<sup>39</sup> Then he cites Aristophanes, Cervantes and Molière in support of his case, thereby arousing the suspicion that he felt how indefensible or, at least, needy of defense his position was. The entire Preface is a justification of his political views which, as he foresaw, would be questioned by the readers of the *Wintermärchen*. Plainly, as he looked upon his work, he was smitten by his conscience or fear of the ever-ready hostile critics, or both.

That the poem would create a sensation, he had no doubt,

and despite all tremors, he was convinced of its lasting value as a political satire. Quite early in the year of the appearance of the *Wintermärchen*, while the work was receiving the final touch, he observed to his publisher that he had written a work which would create a greater furor than the most popular, everyday political pamphlet, but which would also have the permanent value of a classic production.<sup>40</sup> His first assumption turned out to be unqualifiedly true; the second has not been fulfilled by the years which have passed since the *Wintermärchen's* appearance. *Atta Troll* is a classic, but the *Wintermärchen* stands upon feet of clay.

It is odd enough that regarding these works of political flavor, Heine's critical judgments were so vacillating. The *Wintermärchen* left him swinging between contradictory opinions as to its poetic merit. To Campe, as we have seen, he had written enthusiastically, but to Giacomo Meyerbeer, two months later, he condemned it roundly: "Have written a long poem, political and bad; may the muses pardon me for it!"<sup>41</sup> Moreover, anxiety for the success of the book crept into his speculations, and this sufficed to lend to his self-criticism a practical and political, rather than a literary caste. "The opus being not only radical and revolutionary, but also anti-national, naturally I shall have the entire press against me, since the latter is in the hands of either the authorities or the nationalists, and can be exploited to my detriment, under every kind of disguise, by enemies outside the pale of politics and by purely literary villains."<sup>42</sup> Detmold and others wrote favorable reviews, but Heine was not deceived as to the approaching tumult. Various critical reviews attacked his work with violent and open hostility.

After the book was published and the first turmoil past the artist in Heine began to come to the fore. In December he expressed to Campe his desire to revise and add to the *Wintermärchen*, since in its present form it was incomplete, and many important passages were lacking. The new edition would call forth satisfaction and jubilation.<sup>43</sup> As in the case of *Atta Troll*, this revision was never carried out.

The *Wintermärchen* was issued both separately and in the *Neue Gedichte*. On the subject of the rest of the contents of this volume Heine was at this time extremely silent. Most of the poems had been published separately in periodicals, and were not new to the public. For this reason their author may have felt that it was unnecessary to introduce them with any formality. Many of them were written during, or as a result of, his visit to Germany in 1843, and he notes with satisfaction that breathing German air again makes the writing of verse spontaneous and easy.<sup>44</sup> "From future sojourns in Germany I promise myself many poetic fruits, and I can still make something of myself as a poet."<sup>45</sup>

Seven years after the *Neue Gedichte* came the last great lyric cycle, *Romanzero*. The book appeared in October 1851. Since 1848 Heine's physical condition had taken a turn for the worse, and most of the poems in this collection were written from his "mattress-grave." They mark a new period in Heine's poetic achievements, a fact he was himself well aware of. He expressed to Meissner his astonishment that he was able to write the *Romanzero* in such deep physical misery, regarding it as nothing short of a miracle.<sup>46</sup>

One must go back a few years to win a clear conception of his spiritual and mental evolution. In the spring of 1848, with the onset of disease, occurred the conveniently, but erroneously, labeled reconversion to the Judaism of his race,—erroneous because, in any vital, implicit sense, he had never actually abandoned it. In 1849 came the tragic confession: "I am no longer the hedonistic, somewhat portly Hellene who smiled down upon melancholy Nazarenes—I am now only a poor, deathly sick Jew, an emaciated picture of woe, an unhappy man."<sup>47</sup>

The inner struggle to justify the ways of God to man alone gave him strength denied him by his pain-racked body, and although the attempt to establish an inner unity with God often resulted in puzzled despair, the poems of the *Romanzero* are

individual steps in a great spiritual progress. They were affected in a more immediate sense by this gradual change of mind: to ease his conscience he "plucked out everything that belonged to my earlier period of blasphemy with a determined hand," among them "the most beautiful and poisonous of flowers," in which process "many an innocent plant may have been lost."<sup>48</sup> This is the substance of his declaration in the "Nachwort" to the *Romanzero*, that many poems directed against people in high or low station, as well as those of an irreligious nature, had been thrown into the fire.<sup>49</sup>

Heine's own opinion of this work varied from time to time. In September 1850 Campe was told that the "third pillar of my poetic reputation will likewise be of good marble, if not of better material."<sup>50</sup> In the following year, after the collection had gone to press, he wrote depreciatingly that he was not as blind as most fathers to the weaknesses of his children; "my new poems have neither the artistic completeness nor the inner spontaneity nor the swelling strength of my earlier poems, but the themes are more attractive, more full of color, and, perhaps, too, the treatment of them will gain them access to the great public."<sup>51</sup> A few days later he acknowledged that his book would contain, besides flowers, also grass, and that he desired the removal of six poems from the *Lamentationen*.<sup>52</sup> After publication, there is no excess of self-confidence. He recommends the *Romanzero* modestly to a Paris friend, together with the *Faust* ballet, indeed, with greater hope that the latter will give pleasure. They would not have been rushed into the light of day, he declares, if his publisher had not forced his hand.<sup>53</sup>

The book sold well, the fourth edition appearing two months after first publication. It caused a stir in Germany and was suppressed in Austria on account of the poem "Marie Antoinette." What annoyed Heine most was the charge of immorality brought against the book, a charge which he denounced in a letter of the following March as a "lie, and since the book is in so many thousand hands, this will easily be apparent to the

public. So far as the coarse expressions are concerned, one could make a much more boorish selection from the works of Luther, yes, even from the works of dear God himself, from the Bible."<sup>54</sup>

Less than five years had passed after the appearance of the *Romanzero* when the poet closed his eyes on the world. Such revisions as he made in the text for the later editions were only minor and technical; the work remained, as it was born, an unique and completed creation of his maturest poetic fancy. Only here and there in the final years do the sources furnish anything from the poet regarding this last great collection. In a conversation with his French translator St. René Taillandier in 1851, the year the collection appeared, Heine alluded to a certain romantic, chivalrous tone in several poems of the *Romanzero*, written in the manner of Brentano and the *Wunderhorn*.<sup>55</sup> Possibly he may have had in mind such poems as the "Pfalzgräfin Jutta" or "Nächtliche Fahrt." Heine feared that a French translation might not bring out the details and nuances of the original German. The following interpretation, which we owe to Taillandier, while illustrating the careful study Heine had given to his verse, should not be accepted without a few reservations:

It seemed to me enticing to clothe the emotion which was to be expressed in a charming but antiquated form. . . . And this romantic magic (in the German sense), this spring-like quality, is not so out of date in your country as it is among Brentano's and Fouqué's countrymen. On the contrary, its effect would be fresh and new, and in this case that was not at all my intention. Let us put the Pompadour period in the place of Romanticism, Louis XIV in place of the Middle Ages.

Taillandier concludes his report with the remark that, to judge from the fine smile which passed over Heine's face at these words, he revealed the absolute dilettante.<sup>56</sup>

Now, Heine was expert in his understanding of the variety and function of verse; he may easily have given himself to speculations in the manner described by Taillandier. But it is

well not to forget that "der kleine Schalk," as he was often called, was trying to mystify the Frenchman.

Finally, Alfred Meissner has handed down to us a conversation with Heine regarding the powerfully pathetic group of "Lazarus" songs which form the climax of the entire *Romanzero*. I quote it in full, merely reminding the reader that Meissner was at the time young and devotedly attached to Heine.

Meissner: [Who had just finished reading aloud *Lazarus* VIII, the tragic lines, beginning: "Unsterbliche Seele, nimm' dich in acht." Elster I, 420]

What poems these are and what strains! You have never before written anything like them, and I have never heard such tones before. Heine: *Nicht wahr? Nicht wahr?* Yes, I am well aware that it is beautiful, horribly beautiful. It is like a lamentation from the grave, in it someone buried alive is crying out in the night, or even the dead body or the grave itself. Yes, the German lyric has never yet heard such tones, and could not, in fact, for never was a poet in such a position.<sup>57</sup>

A collection of poems appeared in 1854 as the second volume of the *Vermischte Schriften*. They were of the type of the *Romanzero* lyrics. The most important ones are the sixteen composing the group "Zum Lazarus" (Elster II, 91 ff.), which reach a level of heartrending pathos scarcely touched elsewhere in the poet's work. Heine felt that in this collection as a whole he had given the public something entirely new, and not old moods in the old manner.<sup>58</sup> But he was convinced that only naïve natures or very great critics of literature would be in a position to appreciate them.<sup>59</sup> In speaking of these poems to his publisher, while the proof sheets lay before him, he complained about the bad printing and pagination, since they

must appear in the prescribed place, or else the harmony of the book will be destroyed. They are the nose of the book; they must not be in any other place; they are a continuation of the *Geständnisse*, and in the conclusion of the book I return again to the same theme. They are the last poems which I have written in recent years; I did not want to publish a single one of them, no matter



how much I was pressed, and I always pretended that I had to deliver a second part of the *Romanzero* for Campe and should not rob him of his fruits."<sup>60</sup>

Many of the poems he speaks of here, among which may be counted the lovely lyrics to La Mouche, are so personal and intimate that he was perfectly justified in laying down drastic requirements for their publication.

Thus Heine's Parisian period, as far as his poetry is concerned is exemplary of ebb and flood tide, of seasons of great meagerness of output and others of great productivity, of experimental efforts along new lines and, as a whole, of a high degree of lyrical achievement in a wide variety of moods and forms. There is probably not much sincere conviction in his admission to Kühne in 1839 (cf. p. 89) that he no longer had any confidence in his own ability to write poetry; when, however, he conjectured that the trouble may have lain with the temper of the age, and its increasing demand for prose, he was undeniably right. At any rate, three years later he was promising his best productions, a promise fulfilled in the appearance of *Atta Troll*, *Wintermärchen* and the last poems in the *Romanzero*. Certainly, the dissatisfaction he expresses with his poetic activity during the early Paris years was more than balanced by the note of pride and enthusiasm in which he alluded to the later compositions.

Again, there is a marked variety in the themes of the poems of this second period. The poems written in Germany, except for the *Nordsee* cycle, were practically of one pattern. In Paris the choice of subjects as well as verse-forms is greatly diversified, and reveal the poet in the full expansion of his powers. He would never have accused himself at this time, as he did in that early letter to Immermann of the year 1823, of writing poetry that was one-sided or lacking in variety.

It is a range of poetry that includes the collection *Verschiedene*, *Atta Troll*, the *Lazarus* songs, and, finally, the love lyrics to La Mouche. Heine was confidently aware of the wealth of this lyric harvest.

## NOTES

### CHAPTER IV

1. Hirt II, 5. To Varnhagen, Paris, June 27, 1831.
2. Hirt I, 635. To Varnhagen. "Gelingt es mir binnen kurzem nicht in Deutschland, so reise ich nach Paris, wo ich leider eine Rolle spielen müßte, wobei all mein künstlerisches poetisches Vermögen zu Grunde ginge, und wo der Bruch mit den heimischen Machthabern consomirt würde."
3. Hirt II, 4. Paris, June 27, 1831.
4. Elster I, 225 ff. These appeared in the *Salon I* in 1834, some for the first time, others after having been published in the preceding year in the Berlin *Freimütige* (cf. Elster I, 539 ff., Elster II, 22 ff., cf. *ibid.* 499).
5. In Elster II. Those appearing in Salon I or in the *Morgenblatt* (Elster II, 30 ff., cf. *ibid.*, 500) may be identified as belonging to the early Paris years. Among those poems which Strodtmann published for the first time from the *Nachlaß* in the *Letzte Gedichte*, and which now appear in Elster's *Nachlese* (vol. II) there are undoubtedly some which were written in the years immediately following Heine's removal to Paris, but criteria for identifying these are lacking. In Elster's table "Übersicht zur Entstehungs-Zeit der Werke Heines" (VII, 646), attention is called to the uncertainty of the chronology of many of the poems, particularly those relating to "niedere Minne." It seems probable that some of this type which Elster assigns to 1830 (*ibid.*, 648) belong to the early Paris period.
6. Hirt II, 25. To Merckel, Paris, Aug. 27, 1832.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*
9. Hirt II, 36.
10. Hirt II, 83. To Laube, Paris, Sept. 27, 1835.
11. Hirt II, 88, Boulogne sur Mer, Nov. 23, 1835. Of this poem Heine writes: "Die Natürlichkeit ist hier bis zur Karikatur gesteigert, das fühl' ich; es war ein Versuch, Jahrzahlen und Datum im Gedichte einzuführen."

12. Hirt II, 101. Paris, Feb. 4, 1836.
13. Cf. Elster's table in volume VII, 648 ff.
14. Hirt II, 241 ff. To Karl Gutzkow, Granville, Aug. 23, 1838.
15. *Ibid*, 242. "Ehrlich gestanden, die großen Interessen des Europäischen Lebens interessiren mich noch immer weit mehr als meine Bücher."
16. Hirt II, 300. "Mein Lebensalter, und vielleicht unsere ganze Zeit, ist den Versen nicht mehr günstig und verlangt Prosa."
17. Elster I, 9 ff. "Vorrede zur dritten Auflage."
18. Hirt II, 393. To Campe, Paris, Feb. 28, 1842. "Ich bin überzeugt, daß ich jetzt meine bedeutendsten lyrischen Produkte geben kann."
19. Hirt II, 404.
20. Hirt II, 409.
21. *Ibid*. "Sie sehen, ich habe wohl dran gedacht, etwas ganz Neues zu liefern und durch neues Geschrei die Vergangenheit zu vertuschen."
22. Hirt II, 427. To Betty Heine, Paris, Feb. 21, 1843: "Du fragst mich über den Atta Troll; er mag von einem Emanzipations-Juden ein Bischen Färbung bekommen haben, doch hatte ich nur die Satyre auf die menschlichen Liberalismus-Ideen im Sinne, unter uns gesagt."
23. Hirt II, 411. To Laube, Paris, Nov. 20, 1842.
24. *Ibid*.
25. Elster II, 421.
26. *Ibid*.
27. *Ibid*, 422.
28. Elster II, 352, "Vorrede." "Die scheelsüchtige Impotenz hatte endlich nach tausendjährigem Nachgrübeln ihre groß Waffe gefunden gegen die Übermüthen des Genius; sie fand nämlich die antithese von Talent und Charakter."
29. *Ibid*, p. 353.
30. *Ibid*.
31. *Ibid*.
32. *Ibid*.
33. *Ibid*, 354. "Es mochte wohl an meiner damaligen Stimmung liegen, daß namentlich der 'Mohrenfürst' so belustigend auf mich wirkte."

34. *Ibid.*, 351.

35. Hirt II. To Laube, Paris, Feb. 11, 1843, p. 424: "... Der Mangel an Zusammenhang im Gedichte, das Zerstückte, ist eine Folge der ursprünglichen Beschränkung: hätte ich nicht von vornherein die Absicht gehabt, das Gedicht in einem zahmen Journal abdrucken zu lassen, wäre die Persiflage der Zeitideen prägnanter hervorgetreten."

36. Hirt II, 474.

37. Hirt, II., pl 478. To Campe.

38. *Ibid.*

39. Elster, II, p. 428. "Vorwort."

40. Hirt, II., p. 478, Paris, April 17, 1844. To Campe: "... aber ich bin diesmal sicher, daß ich ein Werkchen gegeben habe, das mehr Furore machen wird, als die populärste Broschüre, und dennoch den bleibenden Wert einer klassischen Dichtung haben wird."

41. Hirt, II., p. 493. To Meyerbeer.

42. Hirt, II., pp. 509-510, Hamburg, Sept. 14, 1844. To Detmold.

43. Hirt, II., p. 528, Dec. 19, 1844.

44. Hirt, II., p. 470, Paris, Dec. 29, 1843. To Campe: "Hab auch auf meiner Reise mancherley Verse gemacht, die mir mit größerer Leichtigkeit gelingen, wenn ich deutsche Luft athme."

45. *Ibid.*

46. Hirt, III., p. 251, Paris, March 1, 1852. To Meissner: "Unbegreiflich ist es mir, daß ich in meiner jetzigen tiefsten Misere noch den 'Romanzero' schreiben konnte."

47. Hirt, III., p. 78, Paris, April 15, 1849. "Berichtigung."

48. Hirt, III., pp. 123-124, Paris, June 1, 1850. To Campe: "... und Alles, was aus der frühern blasphematorischen Periode noch vorhanden war, die schönsten Giftblumen hab ich mit entschlossener Hand ausgerissen und bei meiner physischen Blindheit vielleicht zugleich manches unschuldige Nachbargewächs in den Kamin geworfen."

49. Elster, I, p. 485. "Nachwort:" "Gedichte, die nur halbweg Anzüglichkeiten gegen den lieben Gott selbst erthielten habe ich mit ängstlichstem Eifer den Flammen überliefert."

50. Hirt, III., p. 137.

51. Hirt, III., p. 183, Paris, Sept. 7, 1851. To Campe.

52. Hirt, III., p. 187, Paris, Sept. 10, 1851. To Campe. "Daß in meinem Buche nicht alles Blume ist, sondern auch mitunter das liebe Gras hervorgrünt, ist mir wohl bewußt, aber ich wollte dieses nicht ausreuten, da ich das Buch als einen Nachlaß betrachtete. Jetzt aber will ich doch einiges ausrupfen, und ich bitte Sie, folgende sechs Gedichte in der Abtheilung, welche 'Lamentationen' betitelt ist, ungedruckt zu lassen." The poems which he cites are 1) Altes Kaminstück, 2) Diesseits und Jenseits, 3) Lebewohl, 4) Wandere, 5) Kluge Sterne, 6) Morphine. Nos. 1, 4, 5 are in the (Elster edition, Vol. I), collection *Zur Ollea*, pp. 294-297: No. 2) and 6) are in the *Vermischte Gedichte*, pp. 77 and 101, rspt., and No. 3) in the *Zeitgedichte* (Elster, II, p. 205).

53. Hirt, III, 222, Paris, Nov. 5, 1851. To Georg Weerth: "Gott weiß, daß ich auf diese Bücher keinen großen Werth lege, und daß sie nicht so bald das Tageslicht gesehen hätten, wenn Campe mir nicht die Daumschrauben angelegt."

54. Hirt, III, pp. 252-253, March 18, 1852. To Campe.

55. Houben, *o.c.* p. 836, Oct. 19, 1851. "Diese Strophen," fügte er hinzu, "sind von einer etwas ritterlichen, romantischen Art. Ich schrieb sie im Tone Clemens Brentanos und gewisser Teile des 'Wunderhorns.'"

56. *Ibid.*

57. Houben, *Gespräche*, No. 741, pp. 896-897, August 1854.

58. Hirt, III, p. 440, Paris, Aug. 3, 1854. To Campe. "Die Poesien sind etwas ganz Neues und geben keine alten Stimmungen in alter Manier; aber zu ihrer Würdigung sind nur die ganz naiven Naturen und die ganz großen Critiker berufen."

59. *Ibid.*

60. Hirt, III, p. 432, Paris, July 18, 1854. To Campe.

## CHAPTER V

### PARISIAN PERIOD

#### PROSE

AFTER A HALF YEAR'S RESIDENCE IN PARIS, in spite of the richly developed life of the capital, Heine was beginning to express the fear that it would be a tragic situation if, having come to Paris to write of great topics, nothing of a significant nature happened.<sup>1</sup> The writer who in Germany had treated a wide variety of themes, now concentrated his attention upon two weighty ones, the French Revolution and the doctrines of Saint Simon. His standing with radical German expatriates, who expected him to join their forces, was precarious, because from the very beginning he had admitted a dislike for ultra-radical policies. Their propagandistic activities only helped to increase his aversion for "Jacobin dishonesty,"<sup>2</sup> with the result that he was more than ever inclined to moderate his political statements.

In the exciting days of Louis Philippe's struggle against the spirit of Bourbon legitimacy on the one side and Lafayette republicanism on the other, the urge back to journalism was irresistible. The *Französische Zustände* which appeared in 1832 are a collection of political articles which Heine wrote for Cotta's *Allgemeine Zeitung* from December 1831 to September 1832. Heine requested Cotta not to alter the articles to any extent because they came from his head already censored.<sup>3</sup> Nine were published, the tenth was never printed in the *Allgemeine Zeitung*. In spite of the moderation in expression, the Metternich government, through its agent Gentz, who issued a warning to Cotta, suppressed the book in Austrian lands. Heine's sensitive mind naturally swerved around to the radical camp again. The "Vorrede" of October 18, 1832, was written to remind the public that he was no "paid scoundrel."<sup>4</sup> When the book came off the press, the "Vorrede" had been badly mutilated by the Prussian

censor, and Heine immediately took steps to have it published separately, and, finally, after much secretive haggling, succeeded in doing so in the following July.<sup>5</sup> On the eleventh of January 1833 he had a notice published in the *Allgemeine Zeitung* which ran as follows: "Never would I have published that book without this "Vorrede," in which I communicate to the best of my ability the convictions which are only indicated in those articles, and at the same time I am enabled to exercise a supreme duty of citizenship through discussions of a wider range."<sup>6</sup> He complained that more than half of the original "Vorrede" had been suppressed and what remained had been given a servile twist.<sup>7</sup>

His opinion of this first prose work written in France was influenced by the necessity of self-defense against critics like Gentz; in one instance it was flatly derogatory. He wrote to Varnhagen in July that the French translation which had just appeared, together with the un mutilated "Vorrede," was creating a furor, that the letter to the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, the passionate expression of his irritation at the decrees of the *Bundestag*, would shut him off from Germany perhaps forever, but at least would prevent him from being strung to a lantern post in the next insurrection.<sup>8</sup> He confessed that he had no intention to act the rôle of a demagogue and exploit the temporary situation.<sup>9</sup> He saw considerable merit in the form of the articles, chiefly because of its novelty. It was a form that he had previously employed in the *Englische Fragmente*. Their literary value did not receive his full approval. "I wrote them, partly to assert myself in this genre, too, partly for financial reasons,"<sup>10</sup> he wrote Varnhagen in May 1832. The most searching and objective criticism of the work came two decades later, when, in a letter to Campe, he compared it unfavorably with *Lutezia*.

If the *Französische Zustände* have not had as large a sale as the rest of my books, I am not surprised, since this book was nothing more than a rough impression of purely political articles which had appeared consecutively three months previously in the *Allgemeine*

*Zeitung*, and had been published simultaneously by almost all German papers. . . . The book was not intended for the greater public which at that time was not accustomed to reading about politics. Besides, it was not very interesting; it is monotonous and lacks all humoristic interest; there is no mention in it of art or literature or the life of the people; it is a factual relation of day-to-day interests, without the political vision which the newcomer could not then be expected to have.<sup>11</sup>

The first volume of the *Salon* appeared in 1834, containing the *Französische Maler* together with a "Vorrede," a "Nachtrag" dating from 1833, poems, and the *Schnabelewopski*. Heine never spoke enthusiastically about the book, in fact, references to it in his letters are scarce. He wrote Laube in July 1833 that just at a time when he was surrounded by public and private interests, he had a load of aesthetic junk on his shoulders, out of which he had to knead a book together for Campe.<sup>12</sup> It would be a mistake to deduce from this that he was satiated with esthetic and artistic *sujets*, for on New Year's Eve of the same year he confessed to a new interest in the arts, since political preoccupations had almost disappeared.<sup>13</sup>

His lack of interest in the contents of *Salon I* is easily understandable, since, for the most part, it was a mosaic of older writings. "In sending you the accompanying book, Madam," he wrote Baroness Betty Rothschild at this time, "it is not because I give it a very high value, but on the contrary, because I don't judge it in an altogether favorable light. Just put it unread in your bookcase, for the only somewhat readable portion of it, an account of an old picture exhibition, is already familiar to you."<sup>14</sup>

A contemporary letter to his mother is the last interesting commentary on this book. "I have finally received the *Salon*; there are frightful misprints in it, also many obscenities. That happened for political reasons. I wanted to give public opinion a certain twist. It is better to have it say of me that I am a gutter-snipe than to have it consider me a too serious savior of the fa-



therland. The latter, at the present writing, is not an advisable *renommée*.”<sup>15</sup>

The *Romantische Schule* and the *Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* marked the beginning of a new phase of Heine's literary career. The object of both books was to interpret German thought to the French people and to bring about a spiritual *rapprochement* between the two nations. The former was published first in French in *L' Europe Littéraire* (1833), and then, in the same year, in German by the Paris firm of Heidelhoff and Campe, with the title *Zur Geschichte der neueren, schönen Litteratur in Deutschland*. The philosophical work was also published first in French in the *Revue des deux Mondes* in 1834, under the title of *De l'Allemagne*. When published in the final German form by Campe in the second volume of the *Salon*, it had been so mercilessly censored that its appearance drew from the poet a declaration to the press in the form of a protest.

Heine realized that the two works should never have been issued separately. The reason that they were, lay, he said, in the pressure exerted upon him by practical considerations.<sup>16</sup> The result was that *Zur Geschichte der Religion und der Philosophie* appeared in the second *Salon* volume by itself, when it should have preceded and introduced the book on the German *Romantische Schule*, the official title of the second German edition brought out by Hoffmann and Campe in Hamburg, 1835. In the whimsical "Preface" to the *Salon I* Heine had promised, perhaps to reassure the German radical group in Paris, that his next book would be a "red lion," that the "golden angels" had outlived themselves.<sup>17</sup> Although the *Salon II* and the *Romantische Schule* displayed little angelic influence, yet they were still a great distance away from *Börne*, which turned out to be the "roaring lion."

Actually our author had no desire to arouse old animosities at this time, as a letter written to Max Heine on April 21, 1834, shows: "Tell Campe that he can be absolutely sure that I will

soon send him some manuscript. The delay is caused by practical circumstances; I don't want to publish anything of a political nature now (although I have written enough of that sort); in this period of reaction I wish above all to write only mild books."<sup>18</sup>

With the *Romantische Schule*, Heine was unreservedly satisfied. In the case of none of his other books was the author so definitely and consistently persuaded that he had achieved a masterpiece. First of all, in a letter to Immermann, written before the appearance of the book, he made it quite clear what he understood by Romantic literature: "Wir und unsere Feinde," which simply means that Heine regarded the hostile romanticists not from the standpoint of a romanticist, but from that of a *Jung Deutscher*.<sup>19</sup> This is the key to his remark a year later that his book contained good sword blows, and that he had rigorously performed his duty as a soldier.<sup>20</sup> "It was necessary" he wrote Laube, "after Goethe's death to make a literary settlement with the German public. If a new literature is now under way, then this book will at once be its program, and I more than anyone else had to provide it."<sup>21</sup> In a letter to Campe two years later, filled with reproaches softened by light touches of humor, he reiterated his belief that the book would be one of his best.<sup>22</sup> "I am your only classic writer," he wrote, not altogether with irony, "the only one who has become a standing, publishable literary commodity."<sup>23</sup> Revisions were made, to be sure, including the change of title for the second printing, between July and October 1835. After this he could say: "I am now satisfied with the book; I don't think there is a single weak spot in it, and it will last longer as a useful, instructive, and at the same time, entertaining book than the author and publisher, to both of whom I wish, however, a long life."<sup>24</sup>

In the *Geständnisse* which were to accompany a new edition of *De l'Allemagne*, but which did not appear until a few years before his death, Heine gave considerable critical attention to this work as viewed in the retrospect of many years. He did not

conceal the fact that a strongly personal motive had prompted him to authorship of his work on German philosophy. It was a desire to bring out a work which should surpass, in informational content and definiteness of presentation, the famous interpretation of Germany's ideas and ideals that had appeared two decades earlier in Madame de Staël's *De l'Allemagne*. "I gave my book the same title under which Madame de Staël published her famous work, which treats the same themes, and I did it, to be sure, for polemical reasons. That such guided me I shall by no means deny."<sup>25</sup> It was at the expense of Madame de Staël, likewise, whose style glittered with literary effects, "shooting fireworks" which often left behind them "vagueness and obscurity," that he defended his position.<sup>26</sup> Whatever success the renowned French woman writer won with her studies was due to the novelty to the French people of such subjects as German philosophy and romanticism. "I think," he continued when looking back on his work in a perspective of nearly twenty years, "that I have given the most trustworthy information in my book, especially on the former subject (philosophy), and time has now confirmed what seemed astonishing and incomprehensible at the time when I brought it out."<sup>27</sup>

It was particularly with Madame de Staël's conception of German philosophical systems that Heine took issue. His own interpretation of them was bitterly assailed by critics of his own day, and these attacks have continued until the present. It is said that he had an insufficient grasp of his subject. Heine nowhere claimed for his book the thorough scholarship of the professional philosopher. The famous declaration in the *Geständnisse*, quoted below, does not claim credit for doing more than he set out to accomplish:

Yes, as far as German philosophy is concerned, I frankly laid bare the school secrets which, swaddled in scholastic formulas, were known only to the initiated pupils of the senior class. My revelations caused the greatest astonishment in this country [France], and I recall the naïve confession of very famous French

thinkers that they had always considered German philosophy to be a certain mystic fog in which the Godhead dwelt as if hidden in a holy castle in the clouds, and that German philosophers were exstatic prophets who breathed only piety and divine fear.<sup>28</sup>

In an earlier manuscript of the *Geständnisse* he had explained that it had been impossible for him to give the French nation a detailed picture of the various German philosophical systems (he cared too much for the French to expose them to such boredom), but at least he had illuminated the ground-work upon which all those systems were founded.<sup>29</sup> Since his treatment of Hegel in the historical work under discussion was extremely brief and scanty, Heine felt it incumbent upon him to give some explanation for this defect in the *Geständnisse* in 1854. Actually, as he himself confesses, Heine understood very little of Hegel's dialectics when he studied under him in Berlin,<sup>30</sup> and it is beyond any doubt that at the time of writing *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* his grasp of the German philosopher's doctrine was superficial. But after his sketch had been read and criticized, he decided, he tells us, to "compose a universally understandable presentation of the entire Hegelian philosophy, in order to incorporate it as a supplement to a new edition of the book."<sup>31</sup> After two years' labor he discovered, he says, that he stood in no real inner relation to the work, and the latter was burned.<sup>32</sup> Having eased the qualms of conscience by ridding himself of the Hegelian bugbear, there only remained for him the necessity of confessing that his portrayal of German philosophical systems, especially in the first three divisions of the book, contained the most grievous errors.<sup>33</sup> The exposition of Hellenism and Nazarenism, the whole St. Simonistic enthusiasm, now must seem hollow and unreal. "This book," he wrote in the Preface (1852) to the second edition of *Zur Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland*,

is a fragment and shall remain a fragment. I candidly confess that I should prefer leaving it entirely without reprinting. Since its appearance, my views on many matters, especially of a religious

nature, have become considerably changed, and many a view which I maintained then now contradicts my better judgment. But the arrow no longer belongs to the archer as soon as it has fled from the bow-string, and the word is no longer the possession of the speaker when it has escaped his lips, and has even been multiplied by the press.<sup>34</sup>

Treading the footsteps of other writers, he might have altered his statements or changed his views as expressed in the original work, but he considered that every honest man had the right to admit his mistake without such a recourse. Cowardice and hypocrisy are not compatible with literary sincerity.<sup>35</sup> "I confess, therefore, openly that everything that has a reference in this book to the great religious question is as false as it is thoughtless. Just as thoughtless as false is the declaration which I attributed to the school that deism, in theory, was ruined and only led a shadowy existence in the phenomenal world."<sup>36</sup>

When he wrote the preface to the third volume of the *Salon* in 1837, the author had not yet forgotten how his "thoughts had been murdered" by the censor in both the *Romantische Schule* and the philosophical history. As a result of these numerous and important eliminations the original *Tendenz* of both books gave place to an entirely different *Tendenz*.<sup>37</sup> The most important elimination which he had in mind was a section of several pages which the censor had cut out in the conclusion of the historical work. If these expressions of a very pro-German attitude of mind had been allowed to remain, Heine felt that hostile critics would have had no grounds to indict him for lack of patriotism.<sup>38</sup>

In the meantime, in December 1835, the *Bundestag* had placed a ban on all books by members of the so-called *Junges Deutschland* movement. Heine's name stood at the head of the proscribed list. As a protest against this blow to his literary livelihood he wrote an official letter to the committee of the *Bund*:

As soon as free speech is again granted me, I hope to prove most conclusively that my writings are the issue, not of irreligious and

unmoral whims, but of a truly religious synthesis, a synthesis to which not only a new literary school, called Young Germany, but our most celebrated writers as well as philosophers long since subscribed.<sup>39</sup>

It was his wish, he now declares in the Preface to *Salon III*, to defend against the charge of atheism and immorality, not himself, but his writings. This could be accomplished only if he were allowed to develop his ideas on morality and religion from the lofty ground of a synthetic viewpoint.<sup>40</sup> A more detailed discussion of the substance of Heine's synthesis could hardly be original, nor would it fall within the bounds of this study; it can be had in several eminent works on Heine. Suffice it to say, that the indicated synthesis was no rigid, formal system of thought, but rather a state of mind and a view of life, out of which arose his conception of distinctly separate Hellenistic and Nazarenic types.<sup>41</sup>

*Salon III*, the first work to be published after the passing of the decree of the *Bundestag*, contained the *Florentinische Nächte* and the *Elementargeister*. The former had already appeared in 1836 in the *Morgenblatt*, and the latter was a re-working of a portion of the second book of *De l'Allemagne*.

These sketches do not seem to have given their author much satisfaction, but for the moment more serious fields were closed to him. He complained to his friend August Lewald in 1836, "After reading the *Second Florentine Night* you will perhaps understand that, if necessary, when the fields of politics and religion are closed to me, I could live by writing fiction. But, in all honesty, that would not be much fun for me, I find little amusement in it. But one must be able to do everything in bad times."<sup>42</sup> Not only did it afford him little pleasure in the composition but artistic difficulties arose to hinder its progress.

Campe finally contracted for the book in 1837. The year preceding the author had announced to his publisher that a new book was ready in manuscript, "extremely interesting and charming, without touching on either religion or politics."<sup>43</sup> Al-

though its contents were harmless, he asked Campe in all seriousness whether he could shoulder the responsibility of publishing a book with Heine's name on the title-page.<sup>44</sup>

The selection of *Salon, dritter Theil* for the title was made in the hope that it would increase the sale of the two previous volumes in that same series.<sup>45</sup> It was Heine's opinion that the German reading public was at that very moment expecting another book from him; and that rather than cringe in fear, it was more politic for him to show that the censorship decree did not apply to the present work.<sup>46</sup> On the other hand, he was by no means ready to accept the censor's prohibitions with meekness. He surmised that it would be possible for him to print characteristically fiery prose in pamphlet form at a later date.<sup>47</sup> The entire cause of Heine's embarrassment was a recently adopted censorship act. Heine was considering quite wisely, therefore, the advisability of omitting the more provocative passages from the *Salon* volume in order to disarm suspicion. For that there were certain portions of it of a strongly retributive nature, ("Gepfeffertes," as he called them), he knew only too well. The chief danger of irritation lay in the "Vorrede," as will be seen below. Everything of a political and anti-religious nature had, accordingly, been deleted; the book's only chance of success lay in the interest evoked by the material.<sup>48</sup>

Despite these prudent measures, the fear of the censor hung on the horizon and embarrassed him in preparing the work for the press. "I am in the most terrible dilemma, as far as the filling-out of the book goes," he writes his publisher. "Not that I lack copy, on the contrary the latter is accumulating with most gratifying affluence—but fear of the censor—even the most innocent word is now suspect—I am now one of the unhappiest of writers."<sup>49</sup>

He had good reason to be alarmed, for he was prefacing his book with a "Vorrede" which the censor in Giessen refused to pass and which was finally approved by a more lenient censor and published separately under the title *Über den Denunziaten*.

This was an unrestrained attack on Wolfgang Menzel. The author had written expressly to Campe, on March 8, not to submit the "Vorrede" to the Prussian censor. Two weeks later he came with another urgent request:

If you know of any agency other than the Prussian censor through whose hands the book might pass, inform me immediately, for the book must appear soon or not at all. And of all things a *Vorrede*! How could I ever write this under Prussian censorship? The mere name *Vorrede* would arouse those simpletons.<sup>50</sup>

In this letter he refers again to the harmless nature of the Preface. Heine's prophecy was correct: Prussian authorities remembered only too well the preface to the *Französische Zustände* to give their imprint to this one. Even without the Preface, the sale and circulation of the volume of the *Salon* was forbidden in Prussia as soon as it appeared.

The famous Preface was Heine's settlement with Wolfgang Menzel, who had been most active in denouncing the coterie of *Jung Deutschland*. The Preface began threateningly: "I have several very unpleasant remarks to make by way of introducing this book and explaining myself, more in respect to what it does not contain than concerning the contents themselves."<sup>51</sup> After everything reflecting upon the weighty problems of the day had been cast out of the *Elementargeister*, there remained "nothing but a series of harmless fairy tales which, like stories of the Decameron, might serve to make one forget for a few hours the pestilential reality which surrounds us at present."<sup>52</sup> With all the irony and humor at his command he explained and defended his development as a prose writer, without ever falling into the use of invective such as Menzel, in the same circumstances, would most certainly have employed.

I had observed long ago that I was making no progress in the writing of verse, and for that reason I concentrated on good prose. But since one does not go far in prose describing the beautiful weather, the spring sun, the rapture of May, and the yellow plum and peach trees, so I had to look for new material for the new form



as well. Thereupon I chanced upon the unhappy idea of specializing in ideas, and I reflected upon the inner significance of phenomena, on the means of making mankind better and happier, etc.<sup>53</sup>

After he had mastered a beautiful style, he goes on, he was forbidden to write by the *Bundestag*, and adds:

I wept like a child! I had given myself such pains with the German language, with the accusative and dative, I knew how to link the words so beautifully with one another, like pearls on a string, I was already enjoying my occupation, for it shortened the long winter evenings of exile, in fact, when I wrote German, I could imagine to myself that I was back in the fatherland again, with my mother . . . and suddenly I was forbidden to write.

Playfully, with broad, satiric strokes, he announces his intention of retiring to the fold of the Suabian School to sing of the "beautiful weather, the spring sun, the rapture of May, and the yellow plum and peach trees."<sup>54</sup> Cryptically and whimsically he wished it to be known that the book was an indication of his progress backwards.<sup>55</sup> He hesitated a long time before he wrote it; but he regarded it as his duty to write it.<sup>56</sup>

In the *Schwabenspiegel* (1838) Heine again reverts to the "Vorrede."

I would not have published, incidentally, this little pamphlet if treatments of the same subject, the great bombs of Ludwig Börne (*Menzel der Franzosenfresser*-1837) and David Strauss (*Streitschriften zur Verteidigung meiner Schrift über das Leben Jesu*-1837) had come to my view first. But the censor of *Salon* refused this little work . . . his imprimatur . . . "out of devotion to Wolfgang Menzel" . . . and the poor thing, although written tamely enough in political and religious aspects, had to wander from one censor to another for seven months until it was given a home for the emergency.<sup>57</sup>

And, producing his last card, he continues to explain "how finally by means of competent documents, an autographed letter of the Denunciator himself, which was in the hands of Theodor Mundt, the title of my pamphlet is most gloriously justified."<sup>58</sup>

The late eighteen-thirties' saw the poet driven to exploit his talent to meet the continually rising expenditures which his own extravagance and that of his wife brought upon him. In spite of the profitable contract with Campe for a collected edition of his works and the French pension, which may have begun as early as 1836, his quarrel with his uncle and other difficulties had resulted in a heavy debt, and 1837 found him selling his pen for casual Grub Street tasks. Heine was under no illusion as to the lack of merit of the shorter prose-works which were written in the midst of mental worries and physical troubles. At this time he undertook to write an Introduction to *Don Quixote*, "for the sake of the blessed money," he admits, as his publisher would be able to inform himself, judging from its bad style.<sup>59</sup> Hack-writing, he confessed, was not his trade.<sup>60</sup> The week before he had declared in a letter to Campe that it was the worst that he had ever written.<sup>61</sup> He felt, too, that illness had left its imprint upon it.<sup>62</sup>

In the same year, 1837, while he was still very ill, he wrote *Shakespeares Mädchen und Frauen* at the instigation of the French publisher Delloye. It was to be used as a text for a series of engravings based on the female rôles in Shakespeare's plays. His eye trouble made dictation necessary, a process in which he considered that "terse brevity and colored clarity of style" were lost.<sup>63</sup> One of the less commendable motives for writing it was literary jealousy: if Heine did not accept the offer, the publisher, he surmised, would doubtless turn to Ludwig Tieck.<sup>64</sup> Before it was finished he had written more than he originally intended. "Between you and me," he informs Campe in the summer of 1838, "it is no master-piece, but good enough for the purpose."<sup>65</sup> Several weeks later, however, he felt sure that the book presented a respectable unity and that it was certain to enjoy a good reception by the public.<sup>66</sup> This might seem to amount to a contradiction, were it not for the fact that he did not praise it so much for its literary value as for its selling possibilities. One can rest assured that Heine was far from seeing in *Shakespeares Mädchen und Frauen* a *magnum opus*.

The fourth *Salon* volume appeared in 1840. Besides poems and the *Rabbi von Bacherach*, it contained the *Briefe über die Französische Bühne*, which had been published as early as 1837 in Lewald's *Allgemeine Theater Revue*. Perhaps none of Heine's books created less of a sensation than this one which, Elster observes, was almost entirely ignored by contemporary criticism.<sup>67</sup> The author explained to Detmold that the content of these letters was "humorous and reflective."<sup>68</sup> "It is no great *Mord-und-Welt-Spektakelbuch*," he wrote Campe in 1840,<sup>69</sup> referring to the entire *Salon IV*. How low he rated it in comparison with his *Börne*, which had appeared only a few months earlier, has already been mentioned in Chapter II, in connection with the *Rabbi von Bacherach*.

The year which saw the appearance of the fourth volume of the *Salon* found Heine often in a bitter humor. He looked back on five years of literary labor with results which, quantitatively considered, were significant, and, when one realizes, as the author himself did, the handicaps, physical and mental, under which he worked, were indeed impressive. Yet he was obliged to acknowledge to himself that what had been published that was worthy of his genius belonged in the main to an earlier inspiration and execution. With bitterness at heart he wrote Campe in 1839: "My two most important books lie not yet copied, *Börne* and the *July Revolution*—if you only knew how you have ruined my chief pleasure."<sup>70</sup> The main difficulty lay, as so often with Heine, in personal resentment and bickering. A perusal of any of the letters of this period to his publisher is convincing evidence of the sourness that had crept into Heine's relations with Campe. The poet was truly beset on all sides. Gutzkow and his disciples had calumniated his character in the *Telegraph*, issued by Heine's own publisher, and this had brought from the aggrieved poet a sharp reply, in the form of an open letter to Campe, entitled *Schriftstellernöthen* (1839). On top of these disagreeable intrigues carried on behind his back, Heine had just received back from the censor his Supplement to the

*Buch der Lieder*, in a condition of such lamentable disorder that his injured feelings vented themselves immediately in strong language to his publisher. Surely every Heine reader will agree that mercenary, scheming Campe, who was pocketing a golden income from his client's genius, was unpardonably guilty of embittering the poet's attitude toward creative work during these dangerous years.

In the middle of the year 1840, however, in spite of these discouragements, *Börne* appeared. Since his works on German romanticism and philosophy Heine had written nothing of such vast scope as these, and certainly nothing so sensational and provocative. He now believed, and rightly, that his forthcoming *Börne* would arouse considerable expectation and curiosity.<sup>71</sup> Like the skillful publicist that he was, he gave to the book a personal introduction. He pretended to be willing, in order to give his readers their money's worth, to interpolate a portion of his *Memoirs* between the first two chapters, "a beautiful portion which describes the period of enthusiasm of 1830 . . . which lends the whole, as you shall see, an enhanced interest. I am quite calm now, and I believe that my *Börne* will be recognized as the best that I have written."<sup>72</sup>

That this "gift" of a chapter from the *Memoirs* was only a pretense of making a literary sacrifice and a half-way measure of entrenching himself against too violent criticism, is evident from the report which Laube has drawn up of his conversation with Heine at the time when *Börne* was under way.<sup>73</sup> Laube, alarmed by the amount and the tone of personal invective in the original manuscript, advised his friend to offset it by erecting a "mountain," built out of Heine's own higher *Weltanschauung*, an interpolation which would throw the personal animosities of the Heine-Börne feud into shadow. Upon leaving his friend, Heine promised to erect this "mountain." To Laube's exceeding surprise it consisted of nothing but the *Briefe aus Helgoland*, which did little to mitigate the effect of the personal and often vulgar diatribes against Börne's character. The

*Letters* were the only concession that Heine could bring himself to make. This, then, was the additional material of which he wrote *Campe*.

When the work lay ready, there is reason to think that the author himself was somewhat aghast. At least the rationalization process began even before the manuscript left his hands. He took great pains to assure his publisher, and thereby himself, that his book was mild in tone and unpolitical in character. "At the risk of being misjudged, I have omitted every doctrine of my own in the book, and the revolutionaries more than the governments will be dissatisfied with me, because I reprove them without offering something positive in the way of ideas of my own."<sup>74</sup> Three months earlier he had written *Campe*: "The *Börne* is politically not such a wild animal as you fear; of course there are many doubtful points in it, but the entire work will not encounter any extreme displeasure."<sup>75</sup> Manifestly he was whistling to keep up his courage for the approaching storm.

The impression of calm innocence which he desired to make was belied by the use of such epithets as "scandal book" and "roaring lion" with which he at this time contrasted *Börne* with the milder fourth volume of the *Salon*.<sup>76</sup> At least Heine clearly foresaw the consequences that would attend the publication of the book. Similarly as in the Platen episode, as soon as *Börne* appeared, and protests and recriminations fell thick and heavy, Heine doggedly defended himself and his work. Taking his publisher to task for the unauthorized title on the first galley proofs, he emphasized that he had not written a book about *Börne* so much as about the circle in which the latter moved, and that the dead author's name served only as a convenient title.<sup>77</sup> Nevertheless, he was fully convinced of the powerful character of the work, and he had no thought of bowing to the storm of criticism. "But enough—it was born fully fanged,"<sup>78</sup> he wrote, and two months later, when the fury of *Börne's* friends was at its height, "All joking aside, my *Börne* is a very good book."<sup>79</sup>

The storm was not without its effect, and as time went by the author came to regret the bitterness of satire, even though he did not lose faith in the essential soundness of his criticisms nor the historical value of the work. Heine recanted his insinuations against the character of Frau Wohl-Strauss, after six months of abuse and counter-abuse, which is probably without a parallel in German literary feuds. He did this, convinced that the "offensive statements of which I am guilty in her behalf, rested on entirely baseless and false assumptions."<sup>80</sup> It was evidently with his work on Börne in mind that he once said to Heinrich Laube:

It is always a serious matter to tell the ugly truth about an author who commands a wide circle of readers and an army of followers. One does not attack, in this case, this or that line of his book, one does not reprove him, then, for this or that perversion of character, but one combats at the same time the entire army of his friends and even though the [offending] author, in his innermost self feels himself touched, pierced and disarmed, the hundreds of thousands of owners of his works steal up behind him and level their guns at him.<sup>81</sup>

The great prose workmanship of Heine's last years is to be found in the *Vermischte Schriften*, which appeared two years before his death. These contain, perhaps, the two most important documents of his entire literary career, the *Geständnisse* and the *Lutezia*; the first, important for its final, unreserved confession of mature faith, the second because it was the *Meisterstück* of all he had written to effect the so urgently desired reconciliation and understanding between France and Germany.

The particular rôle played by the *Geständnisse* in Heine's literary criticism has already been considered in dealing with his books on German philosophy and on romanticism,<sup>82</sup> with which, in a new edition, he had intended to issue the "Confessions." He was extremely pleased that a French translation of the work which he had been obliged to supply in short order

for the *Revue des deux Mondes* with the title *Aveux d'un poete*, was being read avidly by French readers. An unauthorized re-translation of this French version into "plump Bavarian" was responsible for the poet's haste in publishing his original German draft.<sup>83</sup>

From the first, Heine felt that the *Geständnisse* would be looked upon as a work of unique value. He referred to it as an extremely important biographical document, and prophesied a welcome reception for it among German readers, a prophecy that held true.<sup>84</sup> From it he felt that the unity of his life and work could be better understood;<sup>85</sup> at the same time it was to be regarded as a forerunner of his *Memoiren*.<sup>86</sup> His unstinted praise of Moses, his admiration for the figures of the Old Testament opened the way to an examination of the case of his present-day co-religionists, whom he found no better nor worse than average Christians.

A great civilization of the heart was assured the Jews during an uninterrupted tradition of two milleniums," he writes Lehmann. "I believe that they were able to partake of European culture so quickly simply because there was nothing more for them to learn as far as feeling was concerned; they only needed to acquire knowledge for themselves. But you know all this better than I do, but it may serve as a key to the understanding of what I have said in my *Geständnisse*.<sup>87</sup>

In the *Vermischte Schriften*, between the *Geständnisse* and *Lutezia*, lay *Die Götter im Exil*, and also the essay *Ludwig Marcus*, which had been written ten years earlier. Of the latter he wrote to Campe that the publisher should ask his wife to give him a cushion, that he might read the work kneeling, because he would not have an opportunity to worship such a good, prose style every day of his life.<sup>88</sup>

The flower of the book, from a purely literary, as well as historical and critical, standpoint, was *Lutezia*. Its scope can not be better outlined than in Heine's own words, that he was "giving here the blossom time of the parliamentary régime."<sup>89</sup>

It was to contain the best articles which he had written for the *Allgemeine Zeitung* during the short period of the ministry of Thiers and at the beginning of that of Guizot. The original title was to be *Letters and Reports of the Hey-day of Parliamentary Government*, which, as every Heine reader is glad to record, was discarded for the more apt one of *Lutezia*.

For the last time Heine's correspondence is generously interspersed with self-critical passages whenever there is mention of *Lutezia*. The very origin of the book, a series of articles written in the turmoil of everyday and not intended for book publication, distinguished it from other works, with the exception of the *Französische Zustände*, which resembles the later work only in general form. In 1843 he had treated these articles in a depreciating manner; they were just so much copy; "also, to tell you frankly," he wrote the editor of the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, "I don't place much value in my articles; to be sure, I am not writing them really so much for the fees, as for the reason that I regard it as my duty not to surrender the field entirely to the 'Korrespondenzenden Robert-Macairismus' here."<sup>90</sup> This last allusion refers to the notorious cutthroat and highwayman of France, Robert Macaire, who had been made into a celebrated comedy figure by Friedrich Lemaitre. Heine's imputation of knavery in the field of journalism, as far as it applied to the German foreign correspondents in Paris in the eighteen-thirties, is certainly not unduly stressed; and German journalists who wrote critical, provocative letters to their respective papers of what the poet Heine was doing in Paris, were always maliciously expecting the bitter outbursts of his irritation. For a long time they were responsible for his aggravated, distressed state of mind.

Ten years later the story, as far as *Lutezia* was concerned, was different. He was then, he says, writing the book primarily for the money.<sup>91</sup> Here is a case where the question of Heine's integrity might be raised, for these mercenary speculations seem hardly in tune with the high opinion he had of it as a work



of great merit. Yet there is no reason to suppose—and countless literary illustrations will bear out this statement—that a work of art is any the less one because it was first undertaken to provide for the bare necessities of living. Special indulgence must be granted Heine who with his versatile talent and his practical sense, his facile temperament and Jewish traits of character, was naturally prone to make such a combination of art and money. At any rate, the prospect of a substantial payment did not diminish the painstaking care he devoted to *Lutezia*, but rather it gained for it a more critical and exacting revision.

When the idea of publishing the articles in a book first became a definite intention, he saw that they would have to be revised carefully. The periodic contributions to the Augsburg paper had to be dug out of the archives, and he discovered, after a re-reading, that the greater portion had to be rewritten.<sup>92</sup> With what painstaking care this revision was accomplished may be noted in the correspondence with his publisher. "You have no idea," a letter to Campe reads, "what hellish work I am having to supply what is missing and to produce a harmonious unity by a careful, re-casting process. . . . I am now so capricious that I throw into the basket today what I wrote yesterday, if only the style displeases me, and I have a true passion for condensation."<sup>93</sup>

It cannot escape notice how much emphasis, in this later phase, Heine placed on his style. *Lutezia* was to display it at its best. "You know, I am a past master at arranging, and just because I want to reveal more brilliantly than ever before my art of form and style, you must give me a free hand as concerns time and publication,"<sup>94</sup> he wrote his publisher again. When the work was completed, he claimed unity and completeness for *Lutezia*, despite the heterogeneity of theme, which ran the gamut from *beaux arts*, salons, musical seasons and dance halls to the common incidents of French daily life,<sup>95</sup> "interspersed with many portraits, all of which, God be praised, richly peppered with wit, rob the political portions of their dullness."<sup>96</sup>

He hoped that it would fill the rôle of an historical reference book, since it appealed to the interests of the day. He was confident that it would live in the future.<sup>97</sup> It read, he wished it to be understood, like a novel; only in the middle of the first part were there any dull spots.<sup>98</sup> Because it contained first-hand material and a wealth of experience, it would be tremendously serviceable to those who were interested in a political re-birth for Germany.<sup>99</sup>

A departure from the usual was the employment of actual names of the personages<sup>100</sup> that play important rôles in his pages. This bold procedure is probably accounted for by the author's confident intuition that it was the last book he would ever write; there was no longer any harm in calling a spade a spade. He returned to this feature again in a letter to his brother Gustav, to whom he wrote that the paramount consideration of a work of art should be, not the motives for its origin, but the factual truth involved. He claimed, accordingly, that in *Lutezia* he had not made a single statement without approved warrant and guarantee for it, that there was no anonymous obscurity in it to crop up here and there, and that he called each character by his surname, to the extreme irritation of cowards and hypocrites who would cry out "Wolf!" at such a want of consideration. And, finally, he counted on winning over the public with the language of truth which, though often shrill and odious, was nevertheless incontestably sincere.<sup>101</sup>

To those who wished to unravel a single, all-embracing idea from *Lutezia* and professed to find it expressed, for example, in the person of Louis Philippe, Heine pointed out that the king was merely the frame-work, not the primal force. "The hero of my book, the true hero, is the social movement, which Thiers suddenly launched when he went so far as to trumpet the cause of Germany, and which Guizot sought in vain to check. This is the material of which my book treats." And he ended by assuming the February Revolution of 1848 to be the beginning of a real revolution, and his book, in every right, a preparatory

school for it.<sup>102</sup> Once before he had called it a book of instruction; it aimed to teach as well as to please.<sup>103</sup>

A letter to Francois Guizot is a less sweeping generalization, a more specific and seemingly contradictory version of the preceding. In the drama of the parliamentary epoch "the importance of which for history one does not seem to appreciate enough, and whose true genius will be forgotten because of the vast commotion of events and of unrestrained emotions," there were, he notes, three outstanding personages: Louis Philippe, M. Thiers, M. Guizot,—“and these, naturally, are the three heroes of my book.”<sup>104</sup>

He had taken such great pains with this last book of his so as not “to make a fiasco at the edge of the grave,” that it must have been soothing to him to discover that it was read with great interest. “I have no second arrow to send after it,” he added regretfully.<sup>105</sup>

If there was such an arrow, it was to be the long-planned and much discussed *Memoirs*. Heine had mentioned them several times during his lifetime to his friends and relatives. At times he called them his *Tagebuch*, the crown of his works, and always spoke of them with enthusiasm.<sup>106</sup> In their genesis the *Memoirs* go back to Berlin student days. In a letter to his friend Immanuel Wohlwill in 1823 he wrote that the latter would find portrayed therein a rabble of Hamburgians, few of whom he loved, many of whom he hated, but most of whom he despised.<sup>107</sup> Apparently a desire to avenge himself upon his enemies was the urge which originally set him to work on the *Memoirs*. Not long after he left the Berlin university, he wrote Robert that his confessions would reveal how much his drab, hectic existence was at the service of the *Idee*, the most unselfish ideal of life.<sup>108</sup> Two years later, to be sure, he called these earliest drafts patch-work.<sup>109</sup>

Although family portraits were to be an important part of the book, we learn that political and social problems obtained more space as time went on. He had, it will be remembered, inserted

in his *Börne* material taken from one of his most "precious manuscripts," the *Memoirs*.<sup>110</sup> It was not his intention, he declared in 1837, to write a short sketchy outline of his life, but a work of several volumes, that embraced the entire history of his time, and who should be more qualified to record these great moments of history than the man who knew so many of its figures personally and who had served as an eye-witness of so many of its events? "It is the book that is particularly expected of me,"<sup>111</sup> he writes. A few days later he added that he was occupied day and night with his great book, the novel of his life, and for the first time appreciated the value of all that had been lost by fire in his mother's house.<sup>112</sup> The book was to surpass all the earlier ones in point of interest;<sup>113</sup> he called it his most important work, adding that he preferred to withhold publication until after his death, chiefly because of the sharp dagger-blows aimed at a host of people.<sup>114</sup> But his pecuniary distress would make it necessary for him to rush the work and "regale the world with a bit of scandal."<sup>115</sup>

As the years passed with the *Memoiren* still unpublished, its table of contents had broadened from the idea of mere personal reckoning with critics and personal enemies to an extensive survey of social history. He spoke in 1840 with high elation of the four volumes of autobiography, "which represent my thought and volition, and will be passed on to posterity for the historical material therein, if for no other reason. The new generation will also want to see the swaddling clothes which were its first garments."<sup>116</sup> From his remarks in the *Geständnisse*, the *Memoiren* were to carry a more complete account of post-revolutionary Paris than was contained in the former work.<sup>117</sup>

In 1837 he had offered to finish the *Memoiren* if Campe would publish them immediately. The offer was not accepted and the project dragged along until 1846, the period at which Heine was quarreling with his cousin Karl Heine and undergoing the celebrated change of religious conviction. In 1850 he declared

that he had burned a greater portion of his manuscript because he did not wish to commit a sin against the Holy Ghost, nor to betray his own convictions, least of all to be guilty of ambiguous behavior.<sup>118</sup> This final reason which he gave is of the utmost importance because it plainly reveals that an agreement had been reached with Karl Heine not to publish any memoirs that would reflect in any derogatory sense upon the Heine family, and it shows at the same time what Heine's real motive for burning the documents was.

The life-long plan was not to be surrendered, however, and in 1854 he began a new draft. "But it was real heroism, instead of patching together, to weave new material together again, and I hope, if I am not disturbed, to finish a large portion this year and publish them instantly. Since I know what I may *not* say, I am writing with a great deal of assurance, and nothing will hinder me any longer from launching what I have written while I am still alive."<sup>119</sup> And so the work went on. "The best of what I have to say about our contemporary society," he wrote Adolphe Thiers the year before his death, "you shall one day read in my posthumous *Memoirs*."<sup>120</sup> Evidently he had again renounced his decision to publish them before his death. To the very end he was uncertain whether he should not completely destroy them,<sup>121</sup> or run the risk of having them destroyed by others, a fear which is reflected in the stanza:

Wenn ich sterbe, wird die Zunge  
Ausgeschnitten meiner Leiche;  
Denn sie fürchten, redend käm' ich  
Wieder aus dem Schattenreiche.<sup>122</sup>

A fragment covering his earliest years was published sometime after his death, but it is justly questioned whether all of the manuscript which Heine left has seen the light.<sup>123</sup> What we have certainly does not fulfill the promise contained in the author's own summary, with which the published fragment opens: "Everything that is significant and characteristic is faithfully communicated here, and the reciprocal action of external hap-

penings and internal spiritual events will reveal to you the stamp of my life and person."<sup>124</sup>

Thus, during this long period of fruitful activity in the field of prose Heine was led, in part as a result of the immediacy of his subject matter, in part, again, due to an ever growing necessity of justifying his acts and words as his fame and reputation spread, to speak his mind about his works openly and frankly. When the earlier works, the *Französische Zustände* and the *Französische Maler*, were brought to light, he does not conceal the fact that they merely contained a digest of political events and a journalistic presentation of the subject. With the appearance of the *Romantische Schule* and the book on German philosophy, it is interesting to observe how much more definite and satisfactory Heine's literary criticism becomes, the more he entrenches himself behind a definite, synthetic philosophy of life. There is little question that his fresh interest in Saint Simonistic doctrine lent color and vitality not only to the subjects treated, but to his criticism of them as well. Furthermore, about the time of the appearance of the third volume of *Salon*, it becomes quite evident what topical interests he has a special predilection for. The chief source of his dissatisfaction with this book, one will recall, was the tameness of the subject matter. Having once tasted the fruit of polemical disquisition, he was manifestly bored by any topic that was removed from the area of public debate and concern. As he says in the Preface to *Salon III*, he was too absorbed in the "unhappy idea of specializing in ideas"; and, out of the entire book, the Preface alone was probably the sole portion which he really enjoyed writing.

After the appearance of this work, there follow two years of hack-writing. Concerning the work of these years he is engagingly candid and honest. If anything, his judgment of the Fourth volume of *Salon* was a little severe, for it contains that brilliant fragment, the *Rabbi von Bacherach*.

He no doubt rejoiced, as his criticism reveals, in handling such a dangerous, though personally absorbing subject as Börne.

If Heine did not entirely do justice to the man, he realized that he himself as an artist had given his best in *Börne*. Literary criticism has borne out Heine's dictum as to the high quality of the workmanship in this book. "Only he," writes Thomas Mann, "who understands the blissfully detached smile, with which he replied to friends who warned him of the human, personal and political offensiveness of the book: 'But isn't it beautifully expressed?' can understand what a phenomenon worthy of a memorial this artist-Jew has been to the Germans."

This perfect mastery of form and preoccupation with style continued to remain the outstanding feature of his last prose works.

## NOTES

### CHAPTER V

1. Hirt, II, p. 12, Paris, Jan. 20, 1832. To Baron Von Cotta: "Es wäre schrecklich, wenn ich nach Paris gekommen wäre, um große Dinge zu beschreiben, und es fiele nichts großes mehr vor."

2. Hirt, II, p. 6, Paris, Oct. 31, 1831. To Cotta.

3. Hirt, II, p. 20, April 21, 1832. To Cotta. "Ich bitte, Herr Baron, sorgen Sie, daß mir an meinen Artikeln wenig verändert wird, sie kommen ja doch schon censirt aus meinem Kopfe."

4. Hirt, II, p. 29, Paris, Dec. 19, 1832. To Immermann.

5. *Vorrede zu Heinrich Heines Französischen Zuständen*, Paris, 1833. Heidelhoff und Campe.

6. Elster, 5, p. 8. Einleitung.

7. *Ibid.*

8. Hirt, II, p. 39, July 16, 1833. To Varnhagen. "Diese (Vorrede), das leidenschaftliche Produkt meines Unmutes über die Bundes-täglichen Beschlüsse, versperrt mir vielleicht auf immer die Rückkehr nach Deutschland; aber sie rettet mich vielleicht von dem Laternentod bei der nächsten Insurrektion, indem jetzt meine holde Landsleute mich nicht mehr des Einverständnisses mit Preußen beschuldigen können."

9. Hirt, II, pp. 39-40, Paris, July 16, 1833. To Varnhagen.

10. Hirt, II, pp. 21-22, May 22, 1832. To Varnhagen.

11. Hirt, III, p. 293.

12. Hirt, II, p. 36. "Leider in diesem Augenblick . . . habe ich noch den esthetischen Kram auf dem Hals, muß für Campe ein Buch zusammenkneten."

13. Hirt, II, pp. 31-32, Jan. 1, 1833. To Cotta: "Ich beschäftige mich überhaupt in diesem Augenblick, wo das politische Interesse erlischt, wieder viel mit Kunst. . . ."

14. Hirt, II, 47-48, Feb. 4, 1834. Paris.

15. Hirt, II, p. 51, Paris, March 4, 1834. To Betty Heine.

16. Elster, V, 213, Vorrede: "Überhaupt ist die Art der Behandlung und die Weise der Herausgabe bei meinen letzten Geisteserzeugnissen immer von zeitlichen Umständen bedingt gewesen."



17. Elster, IV, 22. "Die goldenen Engelsfarben sind seitdem auf meiner Palette fast eingetrocknet. . . . Ja, mein nächstes Buch wird wohl ganz und gar ein roter Löwe werden. . . ."

18. Hirt, II, p. 52.

19. Hirt, II, p. 29, Paris, Dec. 19, 1832. To Immermann.

20. Hirt, II, p. 33, Paris, March 28, 1833. To Varnhagen.

21. Hirt, II, p. 34, Paris, April 8, 1833. To Laube.

22. Hirt, II, p. 79, Paris, July 26, 1835. "Die Literatur wird indessen eins meiner besten Bücher seyn. . . ."

23. *Ibid.*

24. Hirt, II, pp. 86-87, Boulogne sur Mer, Oct. 11, 1835. To Campe.

25. Elster, VI, 22. *Geständnisse*.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 40. "Ich schrieb nicht im Genre der Frau von Staël, und wenn ich mich auch bestrebte, so wenig ennuyant wie möglich zu sein, so verzichtete ich doch im voraus auf alle Effekte des Stiles und der Phrase. . . . Ja, die Verfasserin der 'Corinne' überragt nach meinem Bedünken alle ihre Zeitgenossen, und ich kann das sprühende Feuerwerk ihrer Darstellung nicht genug bewundern; aber dieses Feuerwerk läßt leider eine übelriechende Dunkelheit zurück. . . ."

27. *Ibid.*

28. *Ibid.*, pp. 40-41.

29. Cf. Nachträge zu den "Geständnissen," Elster, VI, p. 534. "Ich habe freilich den Franzosen keine ausführliche Darstellung unserer verschiedenen Systeme geben können, auch liebte ich sie zu sehr, als daß ich sie dadurch langweilen wollte—aber ich habe ihnen den letzten Gedanken verraten, der allen diesen Systemen zu Grunde liegt. . . ."

30. Elster, VI, 46. "Ehrlich gesagt, selten verstand ich ihn, und erst durch späteres Nachdenken gelangte ich zum Verständnis seiner Worte."

31. *Ibid.*, p. 48.

32. *Ibid.*

33. *Ibid.*, p. 51. ". . . und da ich nicht einmal den Wiederabdruck bereits vergriffener Bücher verhindern kann, . . . so bleibt mir nichts übrig, als öffentlich zu gestehen, daß meine Darstellung der deutschen philosophischen Systeme, also fürnehmlich die ersten

drei Abteilungen meines Buches 'De l'Allemagne,' die sündhaftesten Irrtümer enthalten."

34. Elster, IV, 155, *Salon II*.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 156. "Ich könnte zwar . . . zu einer Milderung der Ausdrücke, zu Verhüllungen durch Phrase meine Zuflucht nehmen; aber ich hasse im Grund meiner Seele die zweideutigen Worte, die heuchlerischen Blumen, die feigen Feigenblätter, einem ehrlichen Manne bleibt aber unter allen Umständen das unvergräuerliche Recht, seinen Irrtum offen zu gestehen, und ich will es ohne Scheu hier ausüben."

36. *Ibid.*

37. Elster, IV, 319. *Vorwort-Salon III*.

38. *Ibid.* "Worin jene ursprüngliche Tendenz bestand, sage ich nicht; aber so viel darf ich behaupten, daß es keine unpatriotische war."

39. Hirt, II, 98, Paris, Cité Bergère, Jan. 28, 1836. *An die Hohe Bundesversammlung*.

40. Elster, IV, 319.

41. Cf. Elster, VII, 24. *Börne*. Here Heine develops his conception of Hellenistic and Nazarenic types fully for the first time. A little farther along (p. 53), speaking of Shakespeare as a man who was both *Jude* and *Grieche*, he adds: "Ist vielleicht solche harmonische Vermischung der beiden Elemente die Aufgabe der ganzen europäischen Zivilization?" Cf. Browne, Lewis: *That Man Heine*, p. 364; also Lichtenberger: *Heinrich Heine als Denker*, Chap. III, for a critical examination of Heine's philosophy at this time.

42. Hirt, II, 112, Coudry, May 13, 1836. To August Lewald.

43. Hirt, II, 100, Paris, Feb. 4, 1836.

44. *Ibid.*

45. *Ibid.* "Und ich hatte die Absicht, dasselbe unter dem Titel 'Salon, dritter Theil' herauszugeben, um die vorhergehenden Bände etwas zu poussiren."

46. *Ibid.* "Ich glaube, es wäre sogar sehr klug, für folgende Publikationen, dem Publiko zu zeigen, daß die Drohnisse nicht in Anwendung kommen, und dann kann man später auch etwas Gepfeffertes unter eigenem Autornamen drucken."

47. *Ibid.*

48. Hirt, II, 102-103, March 8, 1836. Paris. To Campe.

49. Hirt, II, 116, Amiens, Sept. 1, 1836. To Campe.
50. Hirt, II, 106, Paris, March 22, 1836.
51. Elster, IV, 305, *Vorwort*.
52. *Ibid.*
53. *Ibid.*
54. *Ibid.*, p. 304.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 308. "Dieses Buch diene schon als Beweis meines Fortschreitens nach hinten."
56. Hirt, II, 150, Paris, March 17, 1837. To Campe: "Ich habe . . . lange gezögert, ehe ich diese Vorrede schrieb; es war meine Pflicht."
57. Elster, VI, 330. *Schwabenspiegel*.
58. *Ibid.*
59. Hirt, II, 162-163, Paris, May 10, 1837. To Campe.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 164. "Ich taue verdammt wenig zum Lohnschreiber."
61. Hirt, II, 160, Paris, May 3, 1837. "Er (Herr Hvas) gab mir dafür 1000 Franks und erhielt leider das Schlechteste, was ich je geschrieben habe."
62. Hirt, II, 142, Paris, Feb. 24, 1837. To Hvas: "Und ich fürchte, die beikommende Arbeit, die Vorrede zum 'Don Quixote,' hat der Influenz dieser Krankheit nicht entgehen können."
63. Hirt, II, 229-230, Paris, July 7, 1838. To Campe.
64. Hirt, II, 230-231, Paris, July 23, 1838. To Campe: "Ich fand mich dazu bereit, ihm zu diesem Zwecke einige Bogen zu schreiben, aus wichtigen Gründen, wozu z.B. gehört, daß man sich im entgegengesetzten Falle an Ludwig Tieck gewandt hätte."
65. *Ibid.*
66. Hirt, II, 244, Paris, Sept. 18, 1838.
67. Elster (IV, 444) says: "Das Buch ward aber von dem 'Börne' mit nicht fortgerissen, sondern vollständig in Schatten gestellt; während über den letztern eine Menge ausführliche und meist ungünstige Besprechungen erschienen, blieb dieser Band des 'Salons' bei der zeitgenössischen Kritik so gut wie unbeachtet."
68. Hirt, II, 169, Granville, June 14, 1839.
69. Hirt, II, 313, March 8, 1840.
70. Hirt, II, 298-299, Paris, Sept. 30, 1839.
71. Hirt, II, 307, Paris, Feb. 18, 1840. To Campe: "Die Span-

nung und die Neugier, womit mein 'Börne' bereits erwartet wird, ängstigte mich ein wenig, . . . "

72. *Ibid.*

73. Laube, Heinrich über H. Heine: "Ein ungedruckter Aufsatz Laube's Mtgtlt. von G. Karpeles," *Deutsche Rundschau*, LII, 458, Sept. 1887, Cf. Also Houben *Gespräche* pp. 349, 353.

74. Hirt, II, 319, Paris, April 18, 1840. To Campe: "Ich habe—auf die Gefahr hin, verkannt zu werden—alle eigne Doktrin inf Buche ausgelassen, und mehr als die Regirungen, werden, die Revolutionäre über mich ungehalten sein, weil ich sie tadle, ohne etwas Positives, die eignen Ideen, auszusprechen."

75. Hirt, II, 328-329, July 17 or 18, 1840. To Campe.

76. *Ibid.*

77. Hirt, II, 330, Paris, July 24, 1840. To Campe: "Und dann habe ich nicht eigentlich eine Schrift über Börne geschrieben, sondern über den Zeitkreis, worin er sich zunächst bewegte, und sein Name war hier vielmehr nur ein Buchtitel."

78. Hirt, II, 331, Paris, Aug. 8, 1840. To Campe.

79. Hirt, II, 350, Paris, Oct. 6, 1840. To Laube.

80. Hirt, II, 563, Paris, Dec. 22, 1845. To Werthheim.

81. Laube, Heinrich: *Erinnerungen*, p. 79 ff.

82. Cf. p. 126 ff., Chap. V.

83. Hirt, III, 461, Paris, Oct. 3, 1854. To Campe: "Denn, . . . hat die 'Allgemeine Zeitung,' obgleich sie wußte, daß meine Geständnisse im Begriffe sind, vom Stapel zu laufen, dennoch sich nicht entblödet, . . . eine hundsföttisch miserable Übersetzung zu liefern. . . ."

84. Hirt, III, 440, Paris, April 18, 1854. To Campe: ". . . daß auch, . . . eine höchst wichtige Lebensurkunde, die in der Welt viel Aufsehen machen wird, meine religiösen 'Geständnisse' enthält."

85. Hirt, III, 440, Paris, Aug. 3, 1854. To Campe: "Die 'Geständnisse' sind ebenfalls nicht Jedem zugänglich, doch sind sie wichtig, indem die Einheit aller meiner Werke und meines Lebens besser begriffen wird."

86. Hirt, III, 366, Paris, March 7, 1854. To Campe.

87. Hirt, III, 464, Paris, Oct. 5, 1854. To Joseph Lehmann.

88. Hirt, III, 370, March 10, 1854.

89. Hirt, III, 366-367, Paris, March 7, 1854. To Campe.
90. Hirt, II, p. 446, Paris, Oct. 12, 1843. To Gustav Kolb.
91. Hirt, III, 281, Paris, Aug. 12, 1852. To Campe: "Das Buch, jedoch, welches ich jetzt anfertige, schreibe ich zunächst des Geldes wegen."
92. Hirt, III, 280, Paris, Aug. 12, 1852. To Campe: "Nachdem ich die vorhandenen gedruckten Artikel mit großer Mühe aus den Augsburger Katakomben hervorgesucht, finde ich sie durch Censur und Zusätze so entstellt, so versäuet, daß ich nur den kleinsten Theil davon gebrauchen kann, und auch diesen nach alten Brouillons . . . wieder mit Noth und Mühe restauriren muss."
93. *Ibid.*, p. 283.
94. *Ibid.*, pp. 280-281.
95. Hirt, III, 366-367, Paris, March 7, 1854.
96. *Ibid.*
97. Hirt, III, 384, Paris, April 18, 1854. To Campe.
98. Hirt, III, 433, Paris, July 15, 1854. To Campe.
99. Hirt, III, 433, Paris, July 18, 1854. "Die 'Lutezia' enthält einen geistigen Schatz für die Erwecker des politischen Lebens in Deutschland."
100. Hirt, III, 440, Paris, Aug. 3, 1854. To Campe.
101. Hirt, III, 542, Paris, Aug. 17, 1855. To Gustav Heine.
102. *Ibid.*
103. Hirt, III, 433, Paris, July 18, 1854. To Campe.
104. Hirt, III, 515, Paris, March 6, 1855. To Guizot! "... dont on ne savait assez apprecier l'importance pour l'histoire et dont on oubliera le véritable génie à cause du grand tumulte des évènements et des passions effrénées, qui, depuis, ont envahi la société entière."
105. Hirt, III, 280, Paris, Aug. 12, 1852. To Campe.
106. Hirt, III, 368, Paris, March 7, 1854. To Campe: Cf. also Elster, VII, p. 454, who says, "Wir sehen Heine mit dem Werke oder dessen Vorarbeiten beschäftigt in den Jahren 1823, 1824, 1825, 1830, und besonders 1837."
107. Hirt, I, 341, Berlin, April 7, 1823. To Immanuel Wohlwill.
108. Hirt, I, 266, Lüneburg, Nov. 27, 1823. To Ludwig Robert: "Vielleicht erleben Sie es noch, meine Bekenntnisse zu lesen und zu sehen, wie ich meine Zeit and Zeitgenossen betrachtet, und wie

mein ganzes trübes, dragvolles Leben in das Uneigennützigste, in die Idee übergeht."

109. Hirt, I, 341, Göttingen, Jan. 11, 1825. To Moser: "Nur dann und wann kann ich Stückchen meiner Memoiren schreiben, die einst zusammengeflocht werden. O Flickwerk!"

110. Hirt, II, 307, Feb. 18, 1840. To Campe.

111. Hirt, II, 47, Paris, March 1, 1837. To Campe.

112. Hirt, II, 151, Paris, March 17, 1837. To Campe.

113. *Ibid.*

114. *Ibid.*

115. *Ibid.*

116. Hirt, II, 342, Paris, Sept. 14, 1840. To Campe.

117. Elster, VI, 32, *Geständnisse*. "An einem andern Orte, in meinen Memoiren, erzähle ich weitläufiger, als es hier geschehen dürfte, wie ich nach der Juliusrevolution nach Paris übersiedelte, usw."

118. Hirt, III, 123, Paris, June 1, 1850. To Campe: "... nicht weil es sonst für das Publikum minder kostbar geworden wäre, sondern weil ich es jetzt nicht mehr herausgeben dürfte aus freiem Willen, wenn ich nicht eine Sünde gegen den heiligen Geist, einen Verrath an meinen eignen Überzeugungen, jedenfalls eine zweideutige Handlung begehen wollte."

119. Hirt, III, 368, Paris, March 7, 1854. To Campe.

120. Hirt, III, 532, Paris, July 16, 1855. To Thiers: "Ce que j'ai de mieux à dire sur notre société contemporaine, vous le lirez un jour dans mes mémoires posthumes."

121. Elster, VII, 458-459, *Memoiren*. "... doch ich fürchte, posthume Pflichten oder ein selbstquälerischer Überdruß zwingen mich, meine Memoiren vor meinem Tode einem neuen Autodafé zu überliefern, ..."

122. Elster, II, 108.

123. The question of the existence of further Heine Memoirs is still very much in the dark. Elster writes, "So bleibt die Möglichkeit offen, daß die nachfolgenden Memoiren eines Tages doch noch einmal eine bedeutende Ergänzung erfahren werden, ...". VII, 458. Hirt, on the other hand, states that no material has been found in the possession of Baron Max Heine, and adds: "Es ist demnach kein Grund vorhanden, anzunehmen, daß außer dem

erhaltenen Memoiren-fragment noch ein anderes existierte; das erhaltene wird reichhaltiger gewesen sein, als es auf uns kam, dürfte aber von Maximilian Heine zerstört worden sein. Die leisen Andeutungen Gustav Heines, daßer jemals Memoiren besessen habe, zerfallen in nichts." Hirt, I, 61-62. The entire introduction of Hirt in the first volume of his collected letters is illuminating and records the latest investigations on this subject.

124. Elster, VII, 459. *Memoiren*.

## CHAPTER VI

### HEINE ON HIS LITERARY PERSONALITY

TO BE FULL AND ADEQUATE, a presentation of Heine as a critic of his works must include also what he thought of himself as a literary personality. It is only natural that a highly self-centered individual, such as he was, should be prone to discuss his personality with unreserved candor. This he did at various times, not so much in his literary works as in correspondence and conversations with select friends and acquaintances.

"Out of the earliest beginnings," he wrote in the *Memoiren*, published in 1854-1855, "can be interpreted the latest manifestations."<sup>1</sup> As he looked back on his life, he found that the instruction he had received as a boy constituted one of the early influences which left a deep imprint upon his life. He mentions his early introduction into all the systems of free-thought, leading him to observe that "religion and doubt walked side by side without hypocrisy, from which observation there arose in me not merely disbelief but the most tolerant indifference as well."<sup>2</sup> Here was laid the foundation for a state of mind that presaged the curling lip and the sharp-edged wit of the later Heine. A little later in the *Memoiren* he confessed that out of the Red Sefchen affair sprang the two preëminent passions of his life, the love for beautiful women and the love for the French Revolution.<sup>3</sup> Surely, in his own mind, he must have completed the equation by adding a third passion, so intimately interwoven with his life, his love for poetry.

Time and place he also considered important criteria for the unfolding of life. "About my cradle played the last moonbeams of the eighteenth century."<sup>4</sup> It is significant that his birth fell between two centuries, the one skeptical and enlightened, the other religious and romantic. It is this dualism of the early impressionable period of his youth which gives



Heine's character its unique features. Characteristic of the eighteenth century are his broad, rational views on religion and politics, as well as the wit and skepticism of the *Reisebilder*, the atheistic tinge that so frequently marks both his poetry and his prose. With the early nineteenth century he had in common the romantic ingredients of his poetry, and his stylistic peculiarities generally. The first quarter of the latter century, which fell under the spell of Byron, was, of course, the most impressionable period of the poet's life. If he felt deeply the lack of literary sympathy in Germany, he at least consoled himself with the reflection that he had, in Byron, a "cousin," a spiritually related person in whose company he found delight.<sup>5</sup>

In the oft-quoted letter to Rudolf Christiani (May 24, 1824), written when his enthusiasm for Byron was most intense, and his tendency to identify himself with the cynical poet of England most evident, we read:

As I write this letter, I learned that my cousin, Lord Byron, has died at Missolongi. So this great heart likewise has ceased to beat! It was great, and a heart, and not a little ovary of feelings. Yes, this man was great, he had discovered in pain new worlds, and, like Prometheus, he had defied wretched mankind and its still more wretched gods; and the fame of his name extended to the icebergs of Thule and into the burning deserts of the Orient. Take him all in <sup>6</sup> all, he was a man. We shall not soon see the like of him again.

When critical voices began to be more discriminating in their appraisal of the English Lord's poetry, and when, more especially, it was brought to Heine's attention, in a review of *Reisebilder I* by Karl Immermann, that his poetic temper was, after all, different from Byron's, there was a noticeable cooling of his enthusiasm and a lessened inclination to recognize Byronic characteristics in himself. In the *Nordsee III* he associated Byron with the extreme radicals, describing him as one who would prefer to tear down the old forms "with revolutionary laughter and gnashing of teeth."<sup>7</sup> "Truly," he goes on to say, "in this moment I feel very assuredly that I am no worshiper, or rather,

no sinner in Byron's footsteps: my blood is not so spleenic black, my bitterness comes only from the gall of ink."<sup>8</sup> In 1829, in the *Bäder von Lucca*, he felt it incumbent upon him to disclaim openly a Byronic influence upon his work. If a modern poet, he contended, wrote poetry that contained the characteristic *Zer-rissenheit* or world-sorrow of the age, it was not because he was imitating Byron, but because his soul was no longer in harmony with the cosmos, but was torn by an inner self-persiflage. His amusing philanderer Gumpelino, in one of his "sentimental moods, says to the author, "Do not disturb me. You have no appreciation for pure naturalness, you are a pessimistic man, you have a pessimistic mind, in other words, a Byron."<sup>10</sup> As confidence in his own literary genius began to assert itself fully, he no longer felt it necessary to fall back on Byron. If he had occasion to speak of Byron thereafter, it was rather with critical insight than with flattering adulation. It no longer occurs to him to find his own literary personality mirrored in Byron's.

Another memory of his early attitude toward life is that passage of the *Memoiren* where his mother's efforts to bring him to anchor in a stable, bourgeois profession come up for comment. That remarkable lady, he recalls, was exceedingly discouraged by her son's inability to attach himself to a practical calling. He declared that her disappointment was due to a complete misunderstanding of his character, for the responsibilities of routine, bourgeois life did not accord with his *naturel*, which, more than the great happenings of his life-time, decided his future. Looking back on the tortuous course of his fifty-odd years, he summarizes his life in a paraphrase from Schiller's *Wallenstein*: "In ourselves lie the stars of our fortune."<sup>11</sup>

As a phase of Heine's self-analysis appear his remarks regarding his working habits. Unlike Goethe or Schiller, who were more or less steady workers, Heine was spasmodic and irregular in his periods of creative labor. He confesses this frankly in a letter to Varnhagen, April 5, 1830:

I have no talent for suffering and moping about too long, and when,

in addition to physical ill-health, I had to put up with mental discomfort. . . . I had recourse to my usual domestic remedy, which consists of not living at home any longer, and of squeezing as many earthly delights as possible out of a sick, irksome body. After such a manner of living, with a gradual increase of weariness, there comes a serious desire to work. The ease and indifference with which I have abandoned Hamburg's flesh-pots, its good and bad parties, in order to bury myself in solitude and studies, convinces me that I am, after all, different from others.<sup>12</sup>

This, it seemed, was the only possible working scheme for one who, hedonist by nature, in a beautiful passage demands nothing more of life than the privilege of being left to his own devices.

The second book of *Börne*, containing the Helgoland diaries, begins with the confession that he was tired of this guerilla warfare, and longed for a condition where he could give himself up entirely to his natural inclinations:

What irony of fate that I, who so gladly recline on the soft downs of a quiet, contemplative life of feeling, that I should be the one destined to lash my poor fellow-Germans out of their complacent ease and goad them into the movement. I, who prefer to spend my time observing the flight of the clouds, delving into the intricacies of metrics, listening to the mysteries of the elementary spirits and plunging into the magic world of old fairy tales. . . . I had to edit "Political Annals," expatiate on timely interests, intrigue with revolutionary interests, spur the passions, and tweak the poor German Michael's nose continually so that he might awaken from his healthy giant's slumber. . . .<sup>13</sup>

Could any one describe more perfectly the disharmony of soul which was the fate of the young men who came to their productive years in the reactionary period which followed Waterloo?

Apart from the question of literary excellence, the more one examines Heine's case, the greater becomes the conviction that this exterior life of his, "mad, desolate and cynical," as he once described it in his Berlin student days,<sup>14</sup> was a compensatory balance for the severe mental and spiritual discomforts of his

literary career. It is probable that without these excursions into a cheap, tawdry and vulgar realm his creative energy could not have been rekindled anew. This is only another indication of how closely knit together were his life and work.

In spite of the irregularity of his methods of application, we find that in his periods of serious literary work he wrote carefully, exactly, and with full confidence in himself. He pondered and weighed his words before giving them final approbation. Of the *Buch der Lieder* Legras says it "is not only an immediate product of his inspiration, it is his inspiration, fortified by a criticism that is ripe, calm and sure of itself."<sup>15</sup> No investigation of a poet's critical attitude toward his own poetic personality can overlook the stylistic revisions which he undertakes after the flame of creative production has burned itself out. These may be traced in the revision of the text of Heine's poems as they were prepared for re-publication, and especially in the successive editions of the *Buch der Lieder*. These have already been alluded to in Chapter I. A comparison of the later with earlier texts shows that he was constantly intent on filing and polishing his verse. A few examples from the early lyrics illustrate this:

1. "Belsatzar," *Gedichte*, 1822:

Und schrieb und schrieb an weißer Wand  
Eine leuchtende Flammenschrift und schwand.<sup>16</sup>

*Buch der Lieder*, 1827:

Und schrieb, und schrieb an weißer Wand  
Buchstaben von Feuer, und schrieb und schwand.<sup>17</sup>

Here we observe a subtle heightening of a sense of mystery, of dramatic tension as well as of rhythm through the repetition of the verb *schrieb*, with its suggestion of speechless amazement on the part of the revellers.

2. Similarly in the *Lyrisches Intermezzo*, 1823:

Und wenn meine Liebste ein Herzchen hätte,  
"So wollt' ich drauf machen ein hübsches Sonnett."<sup>18</sup>

and the *Buch der Lieder*, No. 14:

Und wenn meine Liebste ein Herzchen hätt'  
Ich machte darauf ein hübsches Sonnett.<sup>19</sup>

3. *Lyrisches Intermezzo*, 1823:

Wo bunte Blumen blühen  
Im goldnen Abendlicht  
Und lieblich duftend glühen  
Mit bräutlichem Gesicht.<sup>20</sup>

In the revision, the Platanesque, exaggerated assonance of the first line is altered, and a more plastic roundness given to the entire strophe:

*Buch der Lieder*, No. 43.

Wo große Blumen schmachten,  
Im goldnen Abendlicht,  
Und zärtlich sich betrachten  
Mit bräutlichem Gesicht.<sup>21</sup>

4. Sometimes only a word is changed, as in "Die Minnesinger" (*B.d.L.*, Romanzen, No. 11), where the revision allows the poet to occupy the foreground:

*Gedichte*, 1822:

Aber Minnesänger bringen  
Dort schon mit die Todeswund.<sup>22</sup>

*Buch der Lieder*:

Doch wir Minnesänger bringen  
Dort schon mit die Todeswund.<sup>23</sup>

Again, as in the following strophe of the same poem, the structure is changed radically throughout.

*Gedichte*, 1822:

Und wem dort am besten dringen  
Liedes Blutström aus der Brust,  
Der wird's beste Lob erringen,  
Und sein Weh gibt andern Lust.<sup>24</sup>

*Buch der Lieder*:

Und wem dort am besten dringet  
Liederblut aus Herzensgrund,  
Der ist Sieger, der erringet  
Bestes Lob aus schönstem Mund.<sup>25</sup>

These are only a few striking examples out of many which meet the eye of any one who examines the text of the early poems of Heine.

Equally characteristic of a sensitive ear and of a taste for form are the suggestions he sent to Immermann for the revision of the latter's *Tulifüntchen*. In almost every example cited Heine reveals his superior poetic gift.<sup>26</sup> In the same manner his translations from Byron show that, always, in the very center of Heine's thought, is his preoccupation with the question of style.<sup>27</sup> A progressive cultivation of style is a fundamental type of self-criticism. Light is thrown on this by cryptic admonitions to various friends, which we cannot hesitate to consider as applying to himself. "Spare not the critical amputating knife. Be severe with yourself," he wrote Steinmann and Rousseau as early as 1820, "that is the artist's first commandment."<sup>28</sup> Detmold he advised to acquire as much practical knowledge as possible, "because the writer stands in need of it."<sup>29</sup> This almost Spartan rigor towards himself as well as others was inculcated into him early by Schlegel. To Heine, as well as other great artists of the written word like Flaubert and Thomas Mann, what mattered was not so much the thing said, but the manner in which it was said—style, not content, for it is in the former that the writer's personality, his philosophy, his interpretation of life are conveyed. "In art the form is everything, the substance nothing," runs an aphorism in his *Gedanken und Einfälle*.<sup>30</sup>

In a remarkable passage in *Lutezia* he defined the supreme consideration of art as the self-conscious freedom of the spirit, just as it is the highest in all other manifestations of life.

What is the highest aim of art? That which is also the highest aim in all other manifestations of life: the self-conscious freedom of

the spirit. Not merely a piece of music which has been composed with the reflection of that self-consciousness, but even the mere rendition of it can be regarded as the highest and the most artistic, if we are refreshed by that remarkable breath of infinity emanating from it, which gives direct evidence that the performer stands on the same free, spiritual level with the composer, and that he likewise is a liberated being. Indeed, this self-consciousness of freedom in art manifests itself especially in treatment through form, by no means through the content, and, on the contrary, we may maintain that those artists who have selected freedom and liberation for their very themes are usually of a limited, fettered spirit, and really not free.<sup>31</sup>

In the artist's expression of his reaction to his subject he arrived logically at the conclusion that art is its own justification. "I am for the autonomy of art," he wrote in *Salon IV*, "it is not to be regarded as the hand-maid of religion or politics; it is its own definitive justification, just as the world is."<sup>32</sup> The political writer whose interest centers in the ideas or ideals which he wishes to disseminate is generally not a stylist in the sense that he regards the clothing by means of the written word more essential than the message he intends to convey. For him, content predominates over form. That is why Heine, committed to the theory of *l'art pour l'art*, did not, in the last analysis regard himself as a political writer (or at least seriously believe himself to be such), and why he was often particularly captious in his criticism of those who were definitely political. Thus, in the manly, reproachful letter of Oct. 1850 to Laube he does not arraign his friend for having forsaken the liberals and gone over to the reactionary party in Germany. He can quite understand how Laube could direct his satire against empty-headed republicans, the "tail-enders of a great idea," even though this meant only the cheap amusement of guillotining headless people. But the real sin against the Holy Ghost which he had committed was that he was devoting his talents to praising those who were still more insignificant and mediocre.<sup>33</sup> For

this, to Heine, was betrayal of the cause of literature, like the Wordsworth of Browning's poem,

Just for a handful of silver . . . ,  
Just for a riband to stick in his coat.

In spite of Heine's numerous contacts in the field of political experience, in spite of the title of political tribune which was gratifying to him for a time, even in spite of his periodic indulgence in vulgar pastimes, the righteous indignation of that letter plainly indicates that his heart and his faith were on the side of "autonomy of art."

A propos of his visit with Heine in 1847, Laube mentions that, in so far as politics are concerned with literature as sources of inspiration, Heine feared the republican form of government because of its sobriety and prosaic composition.<sup>34</sup> Heine's reasoning on this score was as thin and romantic as that of most subjective artists; his logic was the child of his instincts rather than of a comprehensive understanding of statecraft. "He thought, first of all, of himself, of his personal fate whenever the question of forms of government arose," wrote Laube.<sup>35</sup> He imagined that in a republic the oppositional tendencies which he needed for his poetic wit, and for his poetry as well, would perish.<sup>36</sup> His inborn dislike for moralizing poetry is somewhat related to this feeling.<sup>37</sup> One of the last thoughts expressed in his *Börne* was this: "All traditional merriment, all sweetness, all poetry will be pumped out of life, and nothing will remain except the Rumford Soup of utility. . . . For beauty and genius are also a kind of royalty and do not fit in a society where each individual, dissatisfied with his own mediocrity, seeks to lower all higher endowment to a banal level."<sup>38</sup>

Whether Heine's art is national or the opposite has been discussed so often that the point is reached where his work is imbedded in a vast mass of polemical literature on the subject, in which the pros and cons are weighed *ad nauseam*. At least one must admit that his outlook was practically that of Goethe,



with his ideal of *Weltliteratur*. Just as Goethe was cosmopolitan, without ceasing to be national in the best sense, so we find Heine in opposition to a contraction of the poet's office to the support of nationalism. "Why," he asks, when expressing himself to Fanny Lewald and Adolf Stahr on the subject of Laube's literary activities: "Why does he play the part of the patriot, since every poet is by nature a cosmopolite. It does not suit him at all. . . ." <sup>39</sup>

As one might expect of him, Heine finds the question of style all-important in the discussion of political issues. It is not what one says, but the way in which he says it, that counts in the political and social struggle. This is brought out in the original draft of *Götter im Exil* (1853), seldom printed in the standard editions. He frankly admits that since many writers had given the theme of the book their attention, he could lay no claim to originality in his re-working of it; the service and merit of his work, however, lay in his treatment: he had given thought a new life by removing it from the "catacombs of learning, by virtue of the intelligible word and the necromancy of a healthy, popular style."<sup>40</sup> "Not on account of the thoughts to which Young Germany gave utterance," the conclusion of the passage reads, "but on account of the style in which these thoughts were delivered was the famous anathema pronounced upon it, and especially upon its originator; and in me they persecuted not the thinker but the stylist."<sup>41</sup> This is, perhaps, one of the most profound statements that he ever made.

Those critics who charge Heine with a lack of naturalness, who find his style sophisticated to the point of mannerism and affectation are not without support in the author's own admissions. In one of his interviews with the Lewalds, he advocated the practice of a certain artistic charlatanism as a requisite of good writing.<sup>42</sup> What he meant by this is evidently a consideration of the effects and influences which operate most successfully upon the imagination of the reader, especially of the reader who is without discernment or power of reflection. Such a comment,

with its obvious overstatement of a certain truth, seems to betray a fundamental insincerity until the full drift of his meaning is apparent. It merely boils down to the simple, highly recommendable formula of "write simply, express yourself so that you will be appreciated by the average reader."

He had apparently studied the relationship of talent to genius in all its ramifications, and surveyed from this angle, his reference to *Charlatanismus* becomes less obscure. The *Gedanken und Einfälle* contain this thought: "The genius bears a copy of nature in his mind, and he produces this copy when reminded of it by nature; the man of talent copies nature and creates synthetically. There are, however, characters which hover between both."<sup>43</sup> In another aphorism he defines talent as that which comes from without (Lessing), as imitation by way of the senses, and genius as that which comes from within (Raphael, Shakespeare, Mozart), or through the channels of the spirit. In this, as in all cases, one must guard oneself against assuming that the author introduces critical classifications in order to apply them to himself. Writing once to Moser (Jan. 11, 1825) he says: "The element of genius in poetry is also a very equivocal matter. Talent has more worth. Talent is essential to every accomplishment. To be a poetic genius one must first have the talent. That is the final basis of Goethe's greatness. That is the final reason why so many poets fail; for example, myself!"<sup>44</sup> The despair in the last lines is more apparent than real, for the tone of the entire letter is jocular, at his own expense, a good example of the *Selbstpersiflage* in which he often indulged.

Heine, as he presents himself to us, does not share with Goethe or Shakespeare the perfect harmony of nature and spirit. He belongs rather to that type of genius which we associate with *Geist*, the self-consciously rather than the unconsciously creative artist. It was Schiller who first formulated clearly this antagonism in literary types, with his theory of the *sentimental* and the *naïve* characters. Heine is a "sentimental"

throughout, the legitimate heir of Schiller (in spite of the difference in the quality of their work), the ancestor of Nietzsche and Thomas Mann.

"I have a weakness for everything that is of the spirit,"<sup>45</sup> he wrote in 1854. An interest in philosophy, a predilection for the *idea*, an affection for wit, *bel esprit*, are the usual coefficients of the intellectualized type of man. Herein, he discovered relatively early in life, lay the fundamental distinction between Goethe and himself; Goethe "for whom life, the beautifying and preserving of life, as well as its practical aspect in general, is the highest thing," and Heine, "for whom everything of a practical nature is unappetizing, who, at bottom, despises life and would gladly sacrifice it defiantly for an *Idea*."<sup>46</sup> Heine repeatedly reminds us of this allegiance of his. "Perhaps," he wrote to Robert from Lüneburg, while yet in his student years (Nov. 27, 1823), "you will live to read my confessions and to see how I have judged my period and my contemporaries, and how much all my dreary, hectic life has been at the service of the most altruistic principle, the *Idea*."<sup>47</sup>

In seeking an adequate classification for himself, however, Heine came to define much more closely the nature of the *Idea* which he served. There are, he found, two kinds of *Geist* in the human personality, and it was his outstanding contribution to literary metaphysics to have formulated in colorful language the polarities of the Hellenistic and the Nazarene type. When, in his book on Börne, he calls himself "a descendant of Goethe, a pantheist of the cheerful, religious persuasion," it is not as if he denied that fundamental distinction between himself and Goethe in their relation to reality mentioned above, but rather as if, by contrast with his antagonist Ludwig Börne, he felt justified in claiming a closer affinity in spirit to the poet of *Iphigenie* than to the author of *Briefe aus Paris*. He seems to have been brought to note this distinction and to believe himself to be a Hellene by acquaintance with the doctrines of St. Simon. Goethe's well-rounded personality was also continually

before his eye. Yet Heine apparently doubted whether he was himself the complete Hellene he boasted of being. Too often his desire to be accepted as such seems labored and insincere. With him, as with the Jewish race as a whole, the spirit (*Geist*) outweighed nature. Goethe's Hellenism came naturally, as a result of an integral harmony with nature; with Heine it was too often forced. Pinned down upon his "mattress-grave" in Paris, he finally realized that Hellenism as a creed and battle cry had failed him. His "Berichtigung" to the editor of the Hamburg *Unparteiischer Korrespondent* (1852) is the recording of this failure. Commenting on the origin and course of his illness, he writes a memorable confession, the ironical tone of which diminishes its sincerity no whit:

In many moments, especially when the spinal cramps rebel too agonizingly, there darts through me a doubt whether man is really a two-legged god, as the late Professor Hegel assured me he was twenty-five years ago in Berlin. In the month of May of the foregoing year I had to betake myself to my bed, and I have not been out of it since then. During that time—I desire to make a free confession of it—a great change has gone on in me: I am no longer a divine biped; I am no longer the "freest German since Goethe," as Ruge called me in more healthy days; I am no longer the Great Heathen No. II, whom one compared with the vine-wreathed Dionysius, while one granted my colleague, No. I, the title of grand-ducal, Weimarian Jupiter; I am no longer a joyous, somewhat big-paunched Hellene who smiled down upon melancholy Nazarenes—I am now only a poor, death-sick Jew, a distorted picture of grief, an unhappy man.<sup>48</sup>

The polarity of "character" and "poet" is merely a further variation on Heine's definition of the Hellenistic-Nazarene problem. The credit for being the first to call attention to this distinction he gave to Börne.<sup>49</sup> He defended himself against his German compatriot's accusations of indifference and self-contradictoriness by a clear formulation of the issues involved. In so far as Börne was a Nazarene, he was also a "character," Heine postulates; but the real poet is too much of an artist to

care whether he has "character" or not; in the eyes of the poet, a "character" does not exist on the same level with himself. In the summary which Heine draws up of the problem he brings us back again to the principle of the autonomy and sanctity of art.

Thus he holds it to be a sign of provincialism, we read in the final book of *Börne*, whenever a writer is easily understood by the mob and expressly celebrated as a "character," which is, in the long run, nothing other than servile surrender to the moment, lack of creative composure, lack of art.<sup>50</sup> It is curious how the cycle completes itself by returning repeatedly to the question of style. The conflict between poetic talent (Heine) and character (Börne) narrows itself to one between style and the lack of it.

The theory that one can recognize the character of a writer in his style is not unconditionally true; it is merely applicable to that group of writers who are moved by momentary inspiration when they write, and who obey the word rather than command it. In the case of artists, that theory is inadmissible, because the latter are masters of the word, manipulate it to the end desired, stamp it as their will commands, write objectively; and their character is never betrayed in their style.<sup>51</sup>

Such a theory takes issue with Buffon's assertion that "Le style, c'est l'homme." One may disagree with it, if one will, but it is consistent with Heine's general position that the poetic style transcends personality.

His dislike for the man Börne, it is important to remember, was in equal measure an aversion toward his style.<sup>52</sup> A good prose writer, in his opinion, should be also something of a poet, and that Börne was not. In order to write perfected prose, he says in his book about the latter, a mastery of metrical forms is necessary, without which the prose writer lacks a certain tact in his treatment of word combinations, special expressions, caesuras and various circumlocutions which are only valid in verse, but not in prose: from this arose a disharmony "which

offends only a few, but still very sensitive ears."<sup>53</sup> Here Heine lets out of the bag one of the secrets for the evolution of his prose style, the best German prose of the nineteenth century. This interest in prose style, incidentally, is substantiated in a letter which Theodor Mundt wrote to Gustav Kühne in 1837, to the effect that Heine intended to write on the subject of prose, and that he considered its cultivation the most significant feature of the age.<sup>54</sup> "The prose of today," Heine remarked in *Börne*, "has not been created without a great deal of experiment, deliberation, contradiction and trouble."<sup>55</sup>

He deplored the prevailing standards which allowed any man of conventionally lofty and moral character to claim for himself the name of artist, whether he wrote well or not, a reflection galling to a man like himself who had labored long and arduously for a good style.<sup>56</sup>

His reactions to the older classical writers as well as to his contemporaries furnish another source of information concerning his own opinion of himself. A writer's personality can be unconsciously and gently moulded by his relationship to other writers, without necessarily forfeiting originality and independence. Since self-criticism is comparison, and since Heine was one of the most self-critical artists that ever lived, he undoubtedly arrived at a clearer perception of his own merits as well as defects by taking a definite stand with regard to several great world-authors. Fortunately for our better knowledge, careful and complete studies of Heine's relationship to several brother-authors are in existence. It is not within the scope of this book to branch off in this direction, but merely to emphasize a few cogent factors that bear directly on this study, primarily when they lead Heine to throw a flashlight on himself.

His relationship to Goethe and Börne have been already traversed. It is interesting to observe his reactions to Voltaire. In the *Geständnisse* he disclaimed any spiritual relationship with the great Frenchman, on the grounds that he himself was essentially a poet. As if to illustrate the wide divergence in

thought between Voltaire and himself, he admitted that he had always harbored an admiration for the consistency of Roman Catholic doctrine. This is more easily understandable when one recalls that his early life was spent in the strongly Catholic Westphalian country, where the colorful mythology of medieval faith surrounded him. The sincerity of certain passages of the *Reisebilder*, as well as of lyrics like "Die Wallfahrt nach Kevlaar" and "Die Weihe" was due to an almost morbid absorption of the "infinite sweetness" and "horrifying death raptures" of the poetry of the Catholic Middle Ages. "I, too, was frequently enthusiastic for the highly glorified Queen of Heaven," he declares in reviewing his youth, "out of the legends of Her grace and goodness I made delicate verses, and my first published poems contain traces of this Madonna period, traces which I carefully and foolishly removed from later editions."<sup>57</sup> He was liberal enough to recognize that his previous religious enthusiasms were in no way inconsistent with his present convictions. They were milestones that bounded off separate epochs in his development. It would be merely fatuous for his critics to marshall them together as evidence of an unstable, insincere temperament.

If he did not choose to see in himself another Voltaire, he was quite willing to be compared to Aristophanes. The Heine reader will recall the eloquent enthusiasm for Aristophanian comedy conveyed in the letter to Friederike Robert (Oct. 12, 1825),<sup>58</sup> or his bitter resentment, in a final chapter of the *Geständnisse*, of the agonizing bodily torture inflicted by God, the Aristophanes of Heaven, on "the little, earthly, so-called German Aristophanes."<sup>59</sup> During one of the severe crises of his illness, Adolf Stahr had spoken of him in Germany as the dying Aristophanes, thereby causing resentment among conservatives. But Heine was satisfied with the title. "And yet I am just as good an Aristophanes as the present-day Athenians can ask for."<sup>60</sup>

If there was one single genius with whom he was unwilling to enter into competition, it was Shakespeare. "With Shakes-

peare," he wrote Moser in 1824," I cannot go around in any comfort; I feel only too well that I am not his equal. He is the all-powerful minister and I am a mere courtier, and I have the feeling that he could demote me any minute."<sup>61</sup>

From what has been said, the reader will doubtless agree that Heine understood his own position in the development of German literature more thoroughly than is the privilege of most writers. This arose, partly, from his readiness to talk about himself with others, to discuss his literary significance with detachment, and, often, with humor; partly from an over-developed ego. Motivated by a desire to justify his principles as reflected in his works, he gave in the *Geständnisse* a resumé of his stormy literary career. It is seldom that a writer, whatever unofficial, personal ideas he may have concerning his own significance, is communicative to the extent of formally summarizing for his contemporaries the grounds for his literary success. In the initial pages of the *Geständnisse* he acknowledged his debt to romanticism very much in the vein of the verses of *Atta Troll* quoted above. One passage stands out as a peculiarly sharp observation on the extent of his literary influence:

In spite of my exterminatory campaigns against Romanticism [he wrote, after rendering thanks for the curious title of *romantique defroqué* given him by a French wit], I myself always remained, however, a romanticist, and I was one in a higher degree than I myself divined. . . . It [*Atta Troll*] was, I know, the last free, forest-song of romanticism, and I am its last poet: the old German lyric school ends with me, while the new school of the modern German lyric was opened by me. This double significance is assigned me by German literary historians."<sup>62</sup>

Another passage remarkable for the calm, ruthless objectivity of its self-evaluation is found in the *Introduction* to *Don Quixote*. After extolling Goethe as the foremost lyric poet of Germany he mentions the two off-shoots of the classical school, one of which was represented by the Suabian group, the other by Heine himself. The *Introduction* was written when he was ill and



in ceaseless fear that illness would leave its impression upon the work, a situation that is perhaps reflected in the mild praise of himself in the declaration that, "Both (schools), of course, have their merits; they promoted indirectly the welfare of German poetry."<sup>63</sup> Certainly it must have been from the very depths of despondency that he rated his contribution to German Literature "indirect" and himself an off-shoot (*Ausartung*), a tributary only, of the main stream of German literary tradition. What follows, however, though one-sided, stands out as a vivid and sincere definition of his own literary crusade: "The former (Heine) brought about a healthy reaction to the one-sided idealism of the German lyric, it lead the spirit back to stark reality and uprooted that sentimental Petrarchism which always appeared to us (Heine) a lyric Don Quixotism."<sup>64</sup> Not only is this a protest against the lyric movement in the Suabian School, but it is also an indication that he considered his poetry to be one of rebellion.

The astonishing self-abasement which we have just noticed is not an uncommon feature in his work, but it is more apparent than real. Nevertheless, although egotism is always present in such passages, they are often objective and give evidence that he was keenly aware of his own weakness. One can agree with the statement of Oskar Walzel, in the excellent Introduction to the *Insel-Ausgabe* of Heine's works, that we would know little of his weaknesses if he himself had not taken the pains to unveil them to us,<sup>65</sup> though we must also agree with the succeeding statement that, vain as he was, he was perhaps most vain in his moods of self-mockery.

As far as his nature permitted him, Heine remained loyal to the ideals of *Jung Deutschland*, although he well knew that he was essentially a romanticist. He was linked to the group by a common persecution, even though his poetic nature separated him from the movement, which was so essentially prose in expression, and from its leading representatives, Börne and Gutzkow. He looked forward to the proposed anthology of Ger-

man literature after Goethe's death, with Detmold as co-editor, as another venture which, besides keeping the pot boiling, was to win support for *Jung Deutschland*, since that school was to receive the most sympathetic as well as broadest treatment. Reminding Detmold, Paris, 17, 1837, that he had not given up the idea of compiling an anthology, he went on to indicate what he thought it ought to contain.

It is my opinion that there shall not be too many poems, occupying, perhaps, one-eighth of the book, and, for the most part, poems by more recent authors, whose content is inspired by Hellenic gayety, and few that are characterized by Christian sadness. Above all, the encouragement of a world-patriotic, unsentimental, Hellenistic movement. In the same sense are the prose selections to be made. The selection of the older authors must, as far as convictions are involved, appear to announce the dawn of Young Germany, and it is my intention to dedicate to the Young Germany of today almost more than one-fourth of the book's space toward the end. . . . Even the most subordinate spirits of this movement I shall present, partly to show that the flock is very strong in number, partly also to give my own party a boost.<sup>66</sup>

In other words, the aim of the book was propagandistic, and literary values were to be subordinated to party ones. Apparently Detmold thought that Heine was going too far to include second- and third-rate writers of the newest school, and wrote him to this effect; for in the following letter (Paris, Oct. 3, 1837) Heine modified his views: "Finally," he writes, "we shall not include all the representatives of recent literature (you are right!), but the outstanding ones, and here perhaps about twenty could be taken and still fulfill my purpose."<sup>67</sup> His "purpose," of course, was to attract attention to the movement to which he belonged, and, incidentally, to himself. The publishing firm of Heidelhoff and Campe in Paris, affiliated with the Hamburg firm, had entered into negotiations with Heine concerning this project, but the matter came finally to a standstill, and the anthology was never completed.

Toward the end of his life Heine realized that his greatest contribution to humanity was his poems, and that the other rôles which he had taken upon himself were of value only in so far as they contributed to the fulfillment of his mission as a poet. In the *Préface* of the French edition of the *Buch der Lieder* (1855) there is certainly an expression of regret for the rôle of tribune which he had taken upon himself. "The book which I am publishing today," he writes, "contains the French translation of a part of those lyric productions which have assured me of the name of poet in my own country. It is a beautiful title, and equally as valuable, surely, as that of a great tribune, which I have enjoyed in the same measure for some time; *I still have its bitter taste in my mouth.*"<sup>68</sup> If the tone seems here a little apologetic, there is hardly a doubt that in these days of retrospect he looked to his poetry more than to his prose for his literary renown. Here, as in other relationships, age and disease had wrought a change. Gone was the enthusiasm of the days of the *Reisebilder* when he had proclaimed himself a champion of liberty. "I do not know really whether I deserve having my grave decorated with a laurel wreath," he had declared in the *Reise von München nach Genua*. "As much as I have loved poetry, it was always, nevertheless, only a divine toy or consecrated agent for divine purposes. I have never placed a high value on literary fame, and whether one praises or criticizes my poems concerns me little. But lay a sword on my grave; for I was a good soldier in the war for the liberation of mankind."<sup>69</sup> Even as late as 1851, when he was pinned down upon his death-bed, he emphasized the fighting quality of his work. "My works and nothing else shall speak," he told Caroline Jaubert at this time, "and even the literary laurel wreath, as you, my good friend, know, can in no way move me. No, I am a bold fighter who has dedicated his strength and his talent to the service of all humanity. Place, if you wish, a sling and a cross-bow cross-wise on my grave."<sup>70</sup> At least this last confession should do much to refute the charge often made that at

the end of his life Heine had become a turn-coat in respect to the struggle for liberalism. That he was as sharp-tongued and mentally aggressive on his death-bed as he had been earlier in life, simply shows how consistently human he was. And yet it is unconvincing as evidence of his real state of mind and of the importance he assigned to his life of creativeness. It merely indicates that every conscious moment of his life was filled with a hatred of intolerance and bigotry, and an hostility toward oppressive tyranny. More convincing is the passage from *Lutezia* where he takes no inconsiderable credit to himself for having won his laurel crown in the field of German lyric poetry, so glorious and superior to the "perfumed rubbish" of the French, and demands from posterity his reward. "We shall not give away a single leaf of it, and the stone-cutter whose task it shall be to adorn our last resting place with an inscription, will not have to encounter the least objections when he carves there: 'Here rests a German poet.'"<sup>71</sup>

This sane, really intuitive recognition of his contribution to literature, however, has very often for its natural by-product a deep-seated, nervous egotism. Many of the letters to his publisher and to personal friends reveal the fact that he generally had his audience clearly in mind when he wrote. He was aware that it was his fate to be popular, as we say, to appeal to the average reader. Indeed, Heine without his reading public would be unthinkable. Not only his vanity, but the consummation of the creative act depended upon a very definite attitude on the part of his readers. Thus is explained the dualism of attitude of an early letter to Ludwig Robert (Lüneburg, Nov. 27, 1823): "The acceptance by the great mob is an issue of rather serious import to me, and yet there is no one who scorns the plaudits of the multitude as I do, or protects his personality from its assertions."<sup>72</sup> He "publicized himself" whenever he had the opportunity, because he had strong, unassailable convictions of his own worth. The expression of these convictions, in turn, illuminates his personality.

In the early twenties he was already defiant and boastful. There is, perhaps, an almost challenging modesty in the letter to Dümmler of 1823, where he concedes that he is unable to pass judgment on his own importance as a poet. He cannot overlook, however, the fact that his poems elicited extraordinary attention throughout all Germany, and that even the hostile criticism of them might be taken as a sign of the interest they aroused.<sup>73</sup> Yet the very same year produced the famous quatrain:

Ich bin ein deutscher Dichter,  
Bekannt im deutschen Land!  
Nennt man die besten Namen  
Wird auch der meine genannt.<sup>74</sup>

1827 brought forth the lines to Varnhagen: "Wolfgang Goethe may continue to violate the *Völkerrecht der Geister*; yet he cannot prevent his great name being mentioned often in the future with the name.

H. Heine.<sup>75</sup>

This is egotism without any attempt at concealment, although much of it is ironical and a bold attempt to hide doubts of himself. The same ironical tone is apparent again in a letter to Varnhagen (May 1, 1827), in which he comments upon the latter's *Blücher*: "There is truth in it. And that is the confession of . . . the author of the *Buch le Grand*". Or take his comment to Immermann upon the latter's *Cardenio* a little earlier: "I am full of enthusiasm for this book. It is the best book that I have wanted to write."<sup>76</sup>

The reader can only pardon Heine for such expressions of vanity; there is, in fact, a certain winning naïvete in this vanity that makes it engaging and disarming. If he was actually impressed with his accomplishments, there is hardly any reason to dispute his claim, since posterity has justified his good opinion of himself. On the other hand, this conceit of his had its destructive side. His acidulous pen was a razor-edged sword that he brandished over the heads of unrepentant enemies. The

consciousness that no man could with fewer strokes of the pen avenge himself for the wrong done him, as he wrote Solomon Heine in 1837, kept up his often sinking morale.<sup>77</sup> The laurel crown, he was satisfied, as he had remarked to Lehman a decade before, would instill a holy fear into the rascals who would like to sling mud at him.<sup>78</sup> "It so happens that I am a famous man," he wrote threateningly to Jacob Venedey in 1841, "whoever approaches too close to me in public debate arouses the attention of the public, and many a man has acquired a name for himself with my help."<sup>79</sup> This boast was repeated when he attempted to have himself reimbursed for losses sustained in certain stocks purchased through the broker Friedländer. He had had the experience in life, he wrote his brother Gustav in Vienna, that he could accomplish more through fear caused by his pen than by the pen itself, and that to exploit this fear properly remained his great mission.<sup>80</sup>

Heine was not the man to wait patiently for Fame to come to him, but rather he strode forth purposefully to meet her on her own terms. He had his periods of creative slump and depression, but at such times he only thirsted the more for recognition. The period of the later *Reisebilder*, between his sojourn in Munich and his removal to Paris, was such a time, and Heine was well aware of it. "I must take precautions for my fame," he wrote Lehmann as early as 1826, "since now I have to live more or less by it."<sup>81</sup> And to Merckel in 1827 he finds it necessary to excuse his work on the *Political Annals*. There was much bluff at the bottom of this journalistic undertaking of his, but then he was going to show the world that he was something different from the mere "sonneteering poets of annuals."<sup>82</sup>

There were times, however, when the poet wearied of the chase after fame and deliberately turned his back on her. He probably reflected, as he looked back over his strenuous life, that the game had not been worth the candle, and that the intrinsic value of his life as reflected in his art was the only reward to be coveted. In such a mood he wrote Campe (Nov. 12,

1846) that he desired repose and that his fame was of least importance. But the same letter contains, curiously and ironically, à propos of the feud with Karl Heine, the provocative challenge: "My pen is my sword,"<sup>83</sup> which leads one to question whether Heine was yet ready to retire to the Poet's Corner. As a matter of fact, the conflict in Heine's breast was never ended, the conflict between poet and propagandist. Constitutionally and emotionally he was not adequate to the demands of the program of literary warfare which he had taken upon himself. It always seemed anomalous to him that he should have been summoned, as he felt he was summoned by fate, to take the lead in the European *Zeitkampf* of ideas, when it was his greatest wish to live without responsibility or a definite program, giving his time to poetry alone. We hear this cry again and again, especially in later life, generally after a period of excess, illness or overwork. "I, too, am tired of this guerilla warfare and long for rest," we read in the already quoted passage from the second book of *Börne*.<sup>84</sup> To Campe a few years later he complained: "I am only outwardly, physically ill; spiritually I enjoy the most immortal good health. If I only had peace in order to bring my last creations to light."<sup>85</sup> It was necessary for him to visit the country around Paris or take trips to the sea at Boulogne in order to regain his equilibrium. But when he was again in harmony with the world about him, he was driven to repeat the circle of critical warfare and personal feud, so that there would seem to be some truth in Rahel Varnhagen's clairvoyant words of 1829: "Heine will always be dirtying himself again."<sup>86</sup>

He arrived at a clearer evaluation of life, when little of it remained for him to live. He no longer took any stock in the illusions born of transient things. Fame, he discovered, was a poor substitute for better values; and one of the most pathetic and ironic lines in all of his work is the passage in the *Geständnisse* where he says: "Ah, Fame, this bauble that is usually so sweet, sweet as pineapple and flattery, has become embittered for a long time for me; it now seems to me as bitter as gall."<sup>87</sup>

## NOTES

### CHAPTER VI

1. Elster VII, 461.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Elster VII, 509.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 461.
5. Hirt, I, 324. To Moser, Göttingen, June 25, 1824: "... Es war der einzige Mensch, mit dem ich mich verwandt fühlte, und wir mögen uns wohl in manchen Dingen geglichen haben."
6. Hirt, I, 315-316. To R. Christiani, Göttingen, May 24, 1824.
7. Elster III, 116. *Reisebilder II*. "Die Nordsee III."
8. *Ibid.* "Wahrlich, in diesem Augenblick fühle ich sehr lebhaft, daß ich kein Nachbeter oder, besser gesagt, Nachfrevler Byrons bin, mein Blut ist nicht so spleenisch schwarz, meine Bitterkeit kommt nur aus den Galläpfeln meiner Dinte, und wenn Gift in mir ist, so ist es doch nur Gegengift, Gegengift wider jene Schlangen, die im Schutte der alten Dome und Burgen so bedrohlich lauern."
9. Elster III, 304. *Italien. Die Bäder von Lucca*.
10. *Ibid.*
11. Elster VII, 463. *Memoiren*.
12. Hirt, I, 588: "... Nach solchem Leben pflegt aber mit der Ermüdung auch eine ernste Arbeitssehnucht bei mir einzutreten, und die Leichtigkeit und Gleichgültigkeit, womit ich Hamburgs Fleischtöpfe und Fleischtöpfinnen, seine guten und schlechten Gesellschaften verlassen habe, um mich in Einsamkeit und Studien zu vergraben, giebt mir die Überzeugung, daß ich doch anders bin als die andern." To Varnhagen.
13. Elster VII, 42. *Ludwig Börne*.
14. Hirt, I, 203. To Immanuel Wohlwill, Berlin, April 1, 1823.
15. Legras, Jules, *Henri Heine Poete*. Paris, 1897. pp. 1-2. "Ce n'est pas seulement un produit immédiat de son inspiration, c'est son inspiration reprise par une critique mûrie, reposée, et sûre d'elle-même."



16. Text in Strich's Heine Ausgabe, I, 61, Munich: Georg Müller.
17. Elster I, 47.
18. Strich, I, 172.
19. Elster, I, 71.
20. Strich, I, 186.
21. Elster, I, 82.
22. Strich, I, 62.
23. Elster, I, 47.
24. Strich, I, 62.
25. Elster, I, 48.
26. Cf. Hirt I, pp. 592-607. "Änderungs-Vorschläge zum "Tulifantchen."
27. Melchior, Felix, *Heinrich Heines Verhältnis zu Lord Byron*, Berlin, 1903. p. 71. "Im ganzen können wir unser Urteil jedoch so fassen, daß in diesen wenigen Übertragungsversuchen Heines schon ein großer Fortschritt im technischen Können zu beobachten ist, und man kann nur bedauern, daß der formgewandte Schüler der Romantik . . . seit seiner Abkehr von derselben auch seine Übersetzungstätigkeit aufgegeben hat." Cf. *Anmerkung to the translations*, Elster II, Lesarten, 515. Houben, *Gespräche mit Heine*, p. 656. "Den ganzen 'Romanzero' hat er mir diktirt. Das Gedicht war jedesmal ganz fertig am Morgen. Dann aber gings an ein Feilen, das stundenlang währte und wobei ich ihm *vice cotis* diente, oder vielmehr er meine Jugend wie Molière die Unwissenheit Louisons benutzte, indem er mich über Klang, Tonfall, Klarheit, usw. befragte. Dabei ward denn jedes Präsens und Imperfektum genau erwogen, jedes veraltete und ungewöhnliche Wort erst nach seiner Berechtigung geprüft, jede Ilision ausgemerzt, jedes unnütze Adjektiv weggeschnitten, hier und da auch wohl Nachlässigkeiten hineinkorrigiert."
28. Hirt I, 157.
29. *Ibid.*
30. Elster, VII, 413.
31. Elster, VI, 348.
32. Elster, IV, 524 ff.
33. Hirt, III, 138. "Ja, Du hast ein Verbrechen an dem heiligen Geist begangen, und Du weißt, daß diese Sorte von Verschuldigungen keine Vergebniss finden. . . . Wie weit ich davon entfernt

bin, an die Motive zu glauben, die Dir der republikanische Tugendpöbel mit mehr oder minder *bona fides* andichtet, kannst Du Dir leicht vorstellen; ich begreife, wie Du Helden Deiner ehemaligen Parthei . . . wie Du hohle Liberale, strohköpfige Republikaner und den schlechten Schweif einer großen Idee, mit Deinem prickelnden, durchhechelnden Talente, lächerlich machen konntest-leichtes Spiel hattest Du jedenfalls. . . . Du hast kopflose Menschen guilotinirt. Aber ich begreife nicht, wie Du mit einer stoischen Beharrlichkeit der Lobpreiser jener Schlechtern und noch Mittelmäßigeren sein konntest, usw. . . ."

34. Houben, 563.

35. *Ibid.*

36. *Ibid.*

37. Cf. Houben, pp. 70-72. Wedekind records in his *Tagebuch*, June 16, 1824: "Die entscheidenste Abneigung hatte Heine gegen alle Reflexionen in Gedichten." He tells of the composition of the poem "Elegie," with which Heine intended to satirize moralizing poetry of this nature.

38. Elster VII, 144. *Ludwig Börne*. Rumford Soup: The American Benjamin Thompson, Count of Rumford, for a period a general in the Bavarian army, undertook its reorganization with a view to economy.

39. Houben, 713.

40. Heine-Reliquien von Maximilian Heine-Geldern u. Gustav Karpeles, pp. 245-6: Entwurf zu dem Anfang der Götter im Exil.

41. *Ibid.*

42. Houben, 758 (Adolf Stahr und Fanny Lewald, Oct. 1850): "Es fehlt ein gewisser Scharlatanismus der Kunst, den sie für das große Publikum bedarf. . . . Der Scharlatanismus, den ich meine, besteht unter anderm auch darin, sich zu den Anschauungen und Vorstellungen der Menge herabzulassen."

43. Elster VII, 413.

44. Hirt I, 340.

45. Elster VI, 19. *Geständnisse*.

46. Hirt I, 361, to Christiani, Göttingen, May 26, 1825.

47. Hirt, I, 266.

48. Elster, VII, pp. 537-538. *Berichtigung*.

49. Elster VII, 135. *Ludwig Börne*. "Die Distinktion zwischen

Charakter und Dichter ist übrigens zunächst von Börne ausgegangen, und er hatte selber schon allen jenen schnöden Folgerungen vorgearbeitet, die seine Anhänger später gegen den Schreiber dieser Blätter abhaspelten."

50. *Ibid.*, 134.

51. *Ibid.*

52. Elster VII, 18. "Indem ich hier antizipierend von dem Widerwillen rede, welchen die Goethesche Darstellungsart in Börne aufregte, lasse ich zugleich erraten, dass die Schreibart des letztern schon damals kein unbedingtes Wohlgefallen bei mir hervorrief."

53. *Ibid.*

54. Houben, 296.

55. Elster, VII, 17.

56. Elster VII, 311.

57. Elster, VI, 66.

58. Hirt, I, pp. 382-383. The following will serve as an example of the enthusiasm he felt for Aristophanes: "Ich weiß sehr gut, schöne Frau, daß Sie noch immer nicht wissen, was ich eigentlich will, und wenn Sie auch die plump-vossische Übersetzung jener *Vögel* lesen, so merken Sie es dennoch nicht, denn kein Mensch vermag jene unendlich schmelzende und himmelstürmend kecke Vögelchöre zu übersetzen, jene nachtigalljublende, berauschte Siegeslieder des Wahnsinns."

59. Elster VI, 73. *Geständnisse*: "Ach! der Spott Gottes lastet schwer auf mir. Der große Autor des Weltalls, der Aristophanes des Himmels, wollte dem kleinen irdischen, sogenannten deutschen Aristophanes recht grell dartun, wie die witzigsten Sarkasmen desselben nur armselige Spöttereien gewesen im Vergleich mit den seinigen, und wie kläglich ich ihm nachstehen muß in Humor, in der kolossalen Spaßmacherei."

60. Houben, 944.

61. Hirt I, 324.

62. Elster, VI, 9.

63. Elster, VI, 316.

64. *Ibid.*

65. Walzel, Oskar, *o.c.* p. XXXVI.

66. The two letters to Detmold, Sept. 17, and Oct. 3, 1837, respectively, explain the matter clearly. Hirt, II, 186-189, 191-194.

67. Elster, I, 499. *Préface* to the French edition.

68. "Le livre que je publie aujourd'hui contient la traduction française d'une partie des ces productions lyriques qui m'ont valu dans mon pays le nom poëte. C'est un beau nom, et il vaut bien celui de grand tribun dont j'ai également goûté pendant quelque temps; j'en ai encore la bouche amère."

69. Elster, III, 281. *Italien. Reise von München nach Genua*.

70. Houben, 838.

71. Elster, VI, 391.

72. Hirt, I, 266.

73. Hirt, I, 191.

74. Elster, I, 102. *Die Heimkehr*, No. 13.

75. Hirt, I, 348.

76. Hirt I, 442.

77. Hirt II, 184.

78. Hirt I, 418. "Ich muß etwas für meinen Ruhm sorgen, indem ich jetzt so halb und halb davon leben muß, und vorzüglich, weil der Lorbeer, der meine Stirn umkränzt, doch manchem Lump, der mich mit Koth bewerfen möchte, eine heilige Scheu einflößt."

79. Hirt II, 374-375. "Ich bin zufälliger Weise ein berühmter Mann, wer mir nahe tritt in öffentlicher Debatte, erregt die Aufmerksamkeit des Publikums, und mancher hat sich schon an mir einen Namen erschrieben."

80. *Heine-Reliquien*, 61.

81. Hirt, I, 418.

82. Hirt, I, 494.

83. Hirt.

84. Cf. Note 13.

85. Hirt, II, 598.

86. Houben, *o.c.* 138.

87. Elster, VI, 72.

## CONCLUSION

IT WILL BE WELL to bear in mind what has already been said in the Introduction regarding Heine's sincerity in self-appraisal, his intense subjectivity tending to emotional self-exhibitionism, and his habits of self-pity and self-satire. We have seen how he exploited the Byron fad because it both drew attention to himself and furnished him with an opportunity to indulge the "luxury of woe." How variable his nature was, is proven by the allusion to his "elastic soul" in the letter to Moser, Sept. 30, 1833. One is inclined to the opinion after a careful perusal of his works and letters, that the whole world is for Heine but a stage, whereon is enacted his personal battle with Infinity; that other people and other worlds do not matter. Again, his satirical laughs at himself, while they give rise to bits of fascinating humor, are of questionable sincerity, and only make it more difficult to place a just appraisal upon his utterances relating to his own works.

If the self-critical material which has been traversed appears to be unevenly distributed over Heine's life, one must consider that his communicativeness was periodic and liable to the tyranny of circumstances. In this respect his criticism resembles his creative work. There is a great deal at one time and very little at another. Nevertheless, Heine's critical interest in his works, as shown by the sources at our command, does not keep altogether in step with periods of creative production. Throughout life there are here and there favorites upon which he dwells with prolonged interest. Such are, for instance, the *Nordsee-bilder* and the *Atta Troll*. Naturally, self-appraisal with respect to both his character and his works flows more freely in the latter part of his life. The years following the publication of *Börne* are rich in material of this kind. •

In the matter of poetry, his self-critical activity reaches a

crest with the *Nordseebilder* (1825-26). For the years between his Munich sojourn and his removal to Paris (1827-31) it drops abruptly, for this was the period of his early prose interest. It rises again a little with the publication of the *Neuer Frühling* (1831). For the Parisian period the line remains low, with a temporary rise coincident with the appearance in *Salon I* of the verses gathered into the collection *An Verschiedene* (1834), until 1842, the *Atta Troll* and *Wintermärchen* period, when it takes another swing upward, reaching again a peak with the publication of the *Romanzero* (1851). Undoubtedly the period from the appearance of *Atta Troll* until his last days represents the fullest expression of self-criticism in respect to his poetry.

In prose his activity begins to rise perceptibly with the publication of the first volume of the *Reisebilder* (1824), and reaches a peak with the third volume of this series (1829). After his departure from Germany it remains quiescent for a time, until Heine becomes adjusted again to a new mode of living. It begins again definitely with the appearance of *Salon II* (1835), on the nature of which he had considerable to say. It falls for the period of *Salon III* and *Shakespeares Mädchen und Frauen*, only to pick up sharply with the publication of *Börne* in 1840. From this time on he was occupied with the *Vermischte Schriften* and the *Memoiren*. The last three mentioned certainly give us the richest material bearing upon his own estimate of his prose work.

There is, furthermore, a qualitative distinction to be noted in Heine's self-criticism. In the early years it reveals a preoccupation with models and values, with the elements of style and the mechanics of composition. It is the self-criticism of experimental apprenticeship. The *Harzreise* and the *Nordsee* cycle, and more especially the plays, drew from him observations that were concerned mainly with externalia. His letter to Müller of 1826, for example, is an exposition of the technical side of his poetry (cf. pp. 27-28). It is naturally his poetry more than his prose that gives rise to self-criticism of this nature.

From the date of his declaration to the effect that he was "itching" to express his opinion once, the focus of his interest in the prose field was shifted from the mechanics of style to subject matter. Beginning with the later *Reisebilder* and culminating in *Börne*, his discussion of his work was one of content rather than of style. During the later years of his life his self-criticism still regarded subject matter, but reverted also in the direction of style. But his preoccupation with style at this date is quite different from that of his early student days. It was no longer style treated as a synthesis of various literary devices, such as his comments on the dramatic structure of *Almansor* or the narrative prose of the *Harzreise*, but style seen as an organic unity, the work of art produced by a master craftsman who is pleased with the totality of his self-expression.

As far as the reader is concerned, there is more detailed and greater variety of comment on the prose than on the poetry. A few examples will illustrate this distinction. The *Nordseebilder*, of which he has some important things to say in the earlier period, gives rise to a kind of self-criticism that might be called almost exclusively linguistic and metrical. His conversation with Fanny Stahr centers wholly around the question of the invention of new forms and new rhythms for these poems. This is evidenced again in the contents of the letter to Merckel (cf. p. 28). Let us take, however, a prose work like *Die Bäder von Lucca*. Here the elements of the criticism are varied and extensive. They indicate social motives, as when he remarks in defense of the work that not personal interest, but the welfare of mankind, was at stake. Again he speaks of political moderation in this book, and in other places he leaves no doubt of the extremely radical viewpoint behind it. Furthermore, he lets himself be drawn into the literary arena with a defense of the revolution in literature against the *Kunstschule* of Goethe and Schiller. Finally, however, he shows himself aware of the purely literary merits of his work,—the plastic characterization, the moving comedy.

Perhaps it is not too rash a conclusion to draw that this noticeable variation may be accounted for by Heine's conviction that he was primarily a poet and not a prose writer. This feeling would permit him the assurance that his poetry did not require the defense that the prose works, due to their timely, polemical interests, demanded at his hands.

Heine was very little disposed to permit the judgments of others to affect his opinion of his work. Several people who knew him personally remark that while he lent a considerate, attentive ear to their criticism, he did not necessarily follow their advice. We have seen evidences of this again and again throughout our investigation. The outstanding instance is probably the attempt made on the part of Laube to persuade Heine to change the scope of his *Börne*, an effort which the latter completely ignored. On numerous occasions when his publisher was about to rearrange the order of his poems, as in the case of the *Romanzero*, and thereby destroy what Heine considered the harmonious pattern, he stoutly protested and insisted that the original model be adhered to. It is true that as a student in Bonn he was willing to accept the advice of the much admired stylist August Wilhelm Schlegel, but having once arrived at a clear conception of his own ability and genius, he proved quickly that he was able to get along without these alien props.

His creative vigor, naturally, keeps time with his condition of mental and physical well-being, and fluctuates with it. It determined to some extent whether he could maintain his independence of judgment in the face of hostile criticism or felt himself defenseless before its attacks. The unenthusiastic announcement to Moser (cf. p. 48 above) of the inception of the *Harzreise* is a case in point. Illness, weariness and worry were primarily responsible for his attitude at this time. The joy he seems to have experienced, on the other hand, in writing the Italian sketches was probably due to the fact that, while in Italy, he experienced the happiest and most serene moments of his whole life. It would also seem that the contradictory opin-



ions he held in regard to the *Romanzero*, which at times he regarded as a supreme achievement, were an outgrowth of the severe physical as well mental anguish of the last years of his life.

Age and weakness, however, did not affect his judgment of his own personality. Throughout his entire literary life his self-appraisal contained decidedly persistent elements. He frequently alluded to the frankness and daring of various conceptions and methods of procedure in his works, and these self-appreciatory comments are to be found here and there through practically the entire literary production of his life. In *Le Grand* he had promised to speak "freely and nobly" and he warned his friends in advance that they would find much of a daring nature in it. The same tone was employed in his references to the later *Reisebilder*, to the "Einleitung" to *Kahldorf über den Adel*, and to *Lutezia*, written toward the end of his life. This same disposition to outspokenness and frank commitment of his feelings was the key-note of the letter to his brother Gustav (cf. p. 126) regarding the latter work, where he states that he calls each character by his real name in the interests of truth.

It is clear that he observed a didactic element in his work growing out of a process of self-education and self-discipline. There is no question that Heine labored for the truth in his own way and according to the lights of his genius. The labor was often attended with fierce struggles and bitterness. His self-criticism often contains a record of these conflicts, a record that he himself construed to have a didactic, educative character. He grew in time to regard himself as a teacher of his generation. The educative principle is manifest in what he has to say of *Lutezia* as "a book of instruction," aiming "to teach as well as to please." He speaks, again, in the *Geständnisse* of the "illumination" he provided for the study of German philosophical systems by removing from them their pedantic wrappings. He wished his *Romantische Schule* to be regarded as the program for the new literature under way, and the *Memoiren* was to present the entire history of his time.

Of course, the most persistent element of his self-observation is his stylistic assurance. This aspect has been so thoroughly covered in Chapter VI, as well as in other passages of this book, that it will not be necessary to dwell again upon it. In fact, most of the other persistent elements of his self-criticism are tied up with his consciousness of stylistic supremacy. Certain works he regarded as frank and daring, not so much because of their content, as for the way in which his ideas found expression. The didactic note probably draws on Heine's unconscious feeling that his peculiar gift of expression would make people prick up their ears.

There seems to be little question that Heine assigned nobler and more indestructible values to the stylistic elements in his poetry than in his prose. This is in accordance with his conviction that his poems were his greatest contributions to humanity. It is patent from the depth and intensity of his remarks about the *Romanzero*, particularly the "Lazarus" lyrics, as well as in those concerning the *Nordseebilder*. The one thing that Heine stressed repeatedly in connection with his poetry was its originality of style. This originality had in it nothing static but possibilities of continuous change and adaptability. Originality can be a very ambiguous term. In Heine's use of the word, it is devoid of any superficial flavor whatsoever. Originality meant for him, not a merely artificial juxtaposition of words, but an intensely personal and subtle manner of expressing his deepest emotions. This power he recognized and honored in himself throughout life.

While the persistent elements of his self-evaluation were usually positive and objective, there were times when he seemed blind to the true nature and the implications of that which he had written. If he had taken Laube's advice concerning the excess of personal invective in certain chapters of *Börne*, rejecting them from the original draft, the book would have had more value as a work of art, and he would have been spared any amount of adverse criticism. Most strikingly of all, of course,

was his judgment led astray in the matter of his tragedies. He simply allowed his deep personal interest in the creation and welfare of these works to blind him to his dramatic limitations.

It will perhaps be fitting to note here the works which Heine rated highest. In poetry he would surely have included the *Buch der Lieder*, the *Nordseebilder*, *Atta Troll* and the *Romanzero*. He was too silent in respect to the *Neue Gedichte*, too vacillating in his statements regarding the *Wintermärchen* for them to be considered the full flower of his poetic achievements.

As for the prose works, there are not many indications of an unalloyed admiration for the first two *Reisebilder* volumes. Nor would Heine have been willing to place the rest of the *Reisebilder* among his best creations. These would probably be represented by *Die Romantische Schule*, *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland*, *Börne*, and especially *Lutezia* and the *Memoiren*. A few scattered articles, like *Ludwig Marcus*, would also have to be included.

While he was still a student at the University of Göttingen, Heine had already a definite conception of his type of personality: his whole life was dedicated to the most altruistic principle, the *Idee*. He enrolls himself proudly, not without a touch of pathos and self-exaltation, in the ranks of those who "at bottom, despise life and would gladly sacrifice it defiantly for the Idea."

The Idea which he embraced so enthusiastically was emancipatory, revolutionary,—not in a political but an entirely individual sense. It represented an effort to liberate the human personality from the encrustations of myth, bigotry and superstition. This remained his predominating passion, and his approach to the idea was entirely through the channels of art.

He was conscious of the fact that he was an artist of the genuine school. In no place is this more clearly revealed than in his antagonism to Ludwig Börne. His distinction between "talent" and "character" rises from a clear understanding of his own personality, his temperament and his gifts.

There is evidence in the foregoing pages that Heine did not regard himself as a great thinker in the accepted German, academic sense. Although he remained always open toward intellectual movements and studied and admired the various schools of thought, he could still say, with deep conviction, that the German authorities persecuted him, not as a thinker, but as a stylist,—in short, as an artist. For Heine, certainly, style was the hinge upon which moved all sincere effort to measure the bulk of himself as well as the value of his contributions to the culture of his time.

In the historical, literary evaluation of himself, Heine was penetratingly keen. He does not often revert to cataloging, and when he does, it is with a simple, somewhat terse objectivity. Such is the passage in the *Geständnisse* (cf. p. 177) where he fixes his position as the last poet of Romanticism and the first of the new school. In *Atta Troll* this finds expression in unforgettable images such as the declaration that this is the "letzte freie Waldlied der Romantik!"

The core of Heine's conception of his personality was, no doubt, a deeply imbedded intuition that he was, after all, a unique person, and that, therefore, he could not be made to conform to the requirements of a Procrustes bed of morality, or of political faith or even of critical, stylistic consistency. His remark to Varnhagen in the letter of April 5, 1830 (cf. p. 142) asserting the conviction that he was "different from the others," is the key-note of much of his attitude toward his work and toward life. It accounts for his scorn of bourgeois conventions in Hamburg and elsewhere. It accounts also for his deep antipathy to Börne, who had, he felt, much in common with the conventionalized ideals of German Bürgertum. It is always wise, however, in evaluating Heine's criticism of his own works, to bear in mind his remark to a friend that nothing is more amusing than to mystify one's century.<sup>1</sup> In interpreting his expressions regarding himself we must always be on our guard to make allowance for the irony with which he clothes his critical ideas,

particularly concerning those things which touched him most nearly.

As a general rule, no one has succeeded quite so well as Heine himself in giving clear and trenchant critical estimates of his work. The exceptions are notable, but they belong mainly to periods when he was suffering from ill-health, mental depression and financial worries. His evaluations were precise and amazingly accurate in the case of *Atta Troll* the *Nordsee*, *Börne*, and other works which he firmly believed to be of lasting value. His critical eye was equally sharp in the detection of the weaknesses of groups of lyrics like the *Junge Leiden* and the *Lyrisches Intermezzo*, and such works as the Introduction to *Don Quixote* and *Shakespeares Mädchen und Frauen*. Even though he regarded *Börne* as a great literary achievement, he was honest enough to admit the over-emphasis of purely personal matters. Of course, if one is looking for the detached, objective analysis which is always the stock-in-trade of certain professional criticism, one will not find it in Heine. At times his views are more objective than at others, and when most objective they invariably appeal to the reader as just and fair. He was able to understand that his attack on Frau Wohl in *Börne* (cf. p. 139) was unjustifiable because, with the passage of time, his personal animosity had cooled and he could survey the matter with detachment. But truly objective, in our understanding of the word, Heine never was, and one might justifiably ask, with Anatole France, whether objective criticism, strictly speaking, has any mitigating virtues.

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## NOTES

### CONCLUSION

1. Houben, *o.c.* p. 239. As related by Philarete Chasles: "Wissen Sie was, mein Lieber? Nichts ist wohl lustiger als sein Jahrhundert zu mystifizieren: es muss den Himmel für einen Dudelsack ansehen."

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